Christmann, Christman, Crismon:
From Palatine to Pioneering -- 1748 to 1842

By Kim Bateman
Spring City, Utah
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Introduction

A few years ago I produced a history of my mother's grandparents, George and Sarah Oakey Sirrine, which included brief biographies of their parents and grandparents.[1] One of those stories was the life of Esther Ann Crismon, George Sirrine's mother. Since, regrettably, most historical sources are centered on males, I had to tell most of Esther Ann's story through the better-known life of her father, Charles Crismon, and his was a great one. In addition to documents posted on www.familysearch.org by his many descendants, I was immensely aided by the unpublished book, *Charles Crismon, Western Pioneer* by Charles H. Crismon,[2] which I happened to discover in the archives of the Mesa Historical Museum, from where Ryan Badertscher graciously sent a PDF copy to me. In my own book I briefly summarized the story of the Crismons in America relying heavily upon Charles H. Crismon's book.

Now I am returning to the story of Charles Crismon, hoping to flesh out the facts of his parents and grandparents and to extend the family line across the Atlantic to his German ancestors, a feat at which so far most Crismon genealogists have failed. Sadly, as you will learn from the following chapters, I have discovered the reasons why this stubborn problem persists and perhaps will never be completely solved. My other aim has been to find sources that prove or disprove the assertions and legends of the family story, and I have been humbled in this effort as well, especially in appreciating the quality of the work by Charles H. Crismon and Lonnie Chrisman,[3] who have produced additional relevant sources and a concise essay on Michael Christmann and his descendants.

So, if the work is already done as well as possible, why am I writing my own version? I have four reasons. First, I hope to position the family story more firmly into the context of historical events of the time. Second, I'd like to more clearly separate documented facts from conjecture, including my own, by candidly evaluating the reliability of evidence for each of them. Third, despite the quality of earlier works, I believe that my research has uncovered or clarified a few new facts of interest. Fourth, I just want to get to know my own forefathers as well as I can.

But now I've got to warn you. The irony in my effort to ferret out the truth is this: no doubt I've made a ton of errors of my own, and some of them are probably serious and fundamental. There are just not enough reliable facts available.

Let me give you an example. As far as I know, the only documentation of the name of my fifth great grandmother, Elizabeth Seits, the grandmother of Charles Crismon, is a notebook kept by S.W.J. Chrestman, Charles Crismon's cousin, which was found in an attic in Bruce, Mississippi around 1891. He wrote, *My daddy's name was Michael Christman. My mother was named Elizabeth Wydner. Grandpap's name was also Michael. Grandma's name was Elizabeth Seits. Granpap Michael was killed in North Carolina by Rogues. Grandpap Michael came from Wuethenberg (sic) to Philadelphia to Rowan County, North Carolina."*[4] I am so grateful to have a copy, but what if he was mistaken? If he is, then my

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[1] Bateman, K.A., *Letters of Lace and Stones: Oakeys and Sirrines, Two Families Joined and Separated by Pioneering and Polygamy,* 2018. https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/sources/KGCB-N2B

[2] https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KGCB-N2B

[3] www.chrisman.org

[4] http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/catawba-west/2005-08/1123548352

pages about the Seits family history are all wrong. So are my conclusions about where the family went for support after Michael was killed.

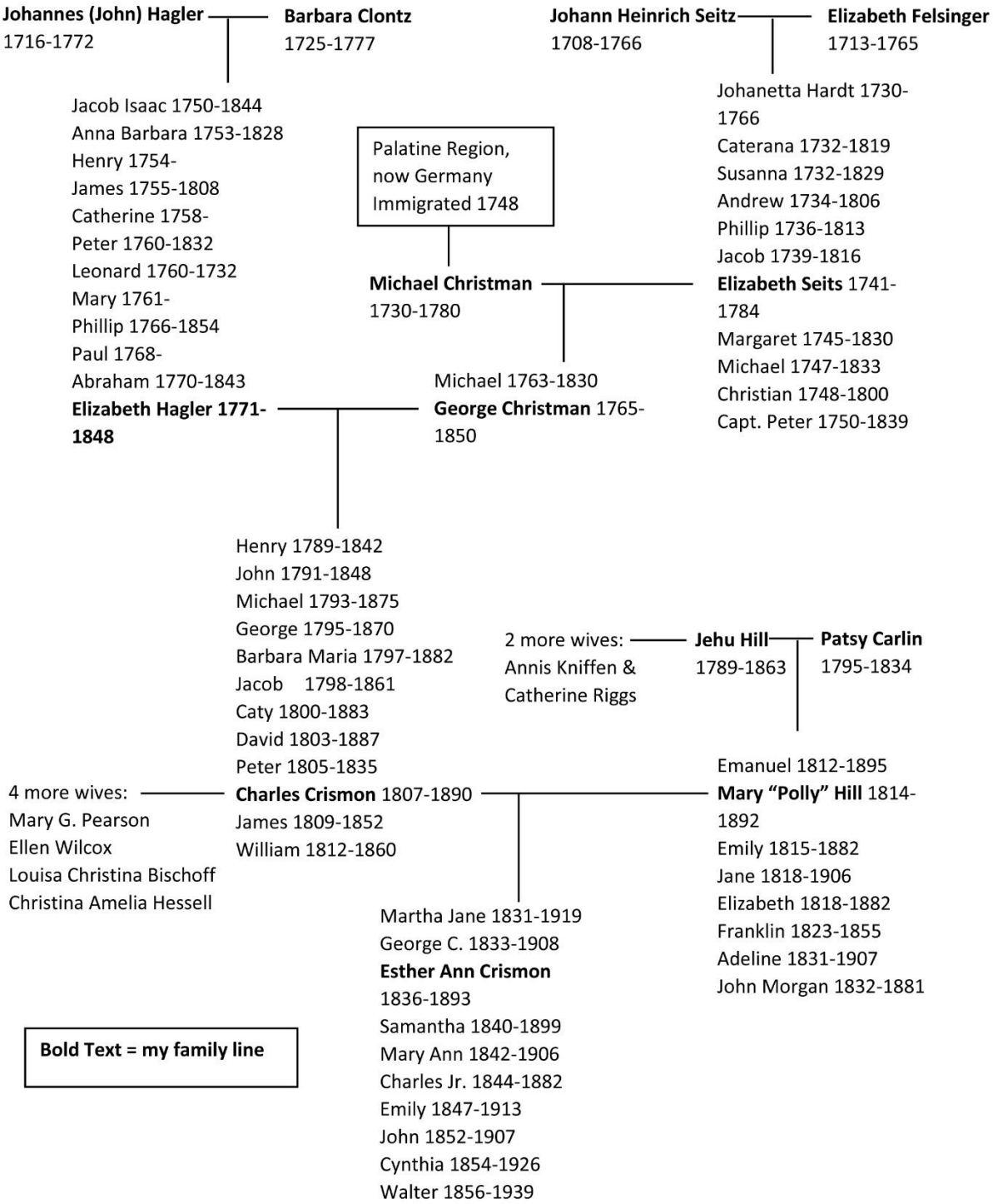
I have tried to use sources for all my writing, but many are much shakier than Chrestman's note. The only primary sources for finding family members of that time and place are wills and property records, but these are rarely available and usually link only a few if any members to each other. Thankfully, the U.S. Census is available beginning in 1790, but although the family members were counted, none but the head of household were named until after 1840, and their ages and genders were only given in ranges such as 0-10 years old. Published histories of the area are valuable, especially during the Revolutionary War period, but they often don't mention family members, and only provide context. And these records sometimes conflict with each other. Much of the time I have been reduced to relying on amateur family genealogies, which are often speculative and unsourced.

And then there's the variation of the spelling of names. To put together a possible family for Elizabeth Seits, I quickly figured out that it was probably originally spelled Seitz. That is a recognizable German name to me, since my first landlord during my L.D.S. church mission in Munich was the irritable and unpredictable Herr Seitz, who surprised us with a roast duck dinner on Christmas Day, and then sent us a bill. But in the case of Elizabeth's family the name was corrupted to Seits, Sites, Sides, Sitis, and Sitz. If I don't accept those spellings as equivalent, Elizabeth had no relatives in the area at all, but accepting those variations also increases the risk of connecting her to the wrong people.

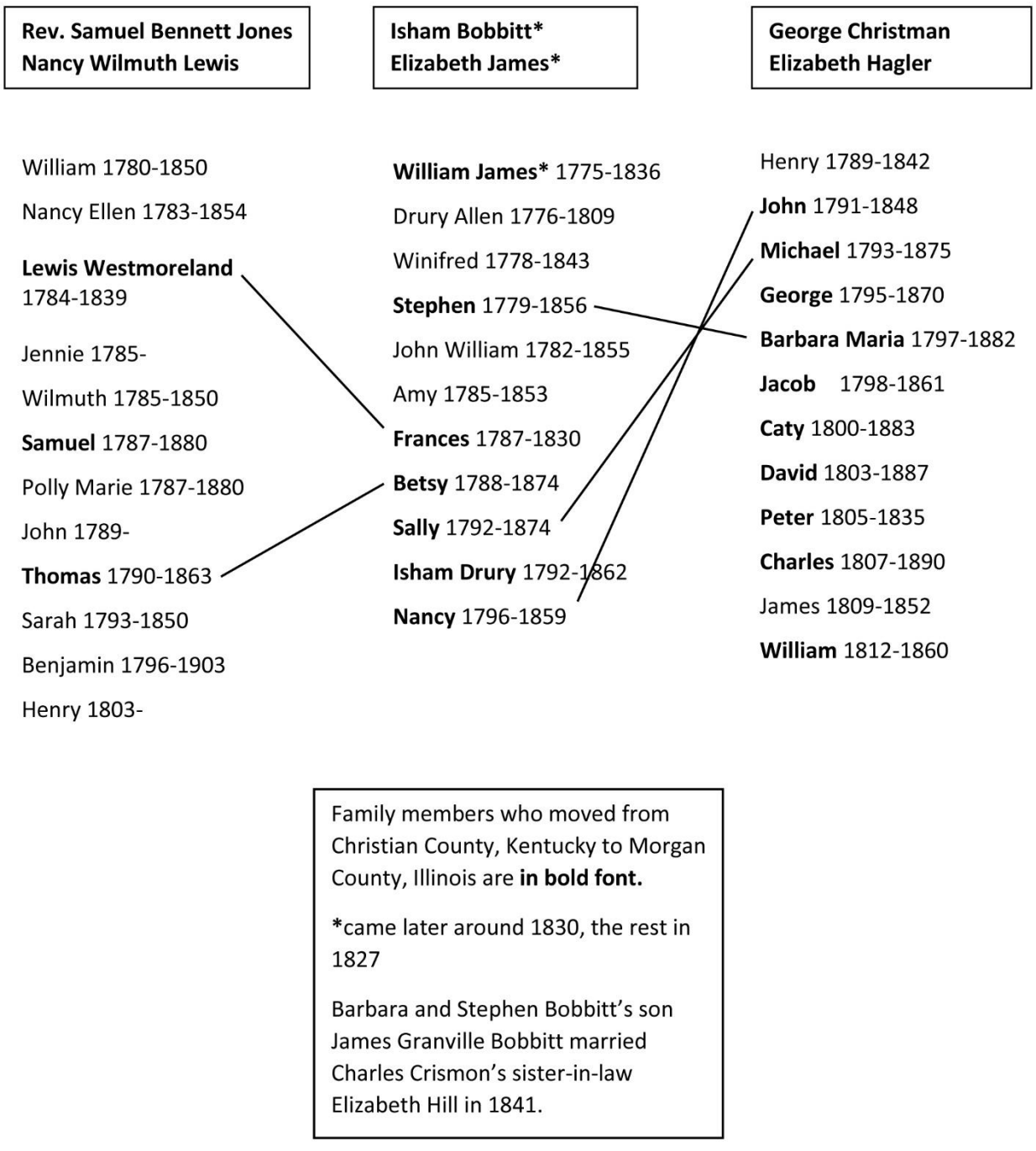
Property records, maps, and wills supply names and places, but these are moving targets. For example, we know that the Seitz family lived in Dutch Buffalo Creek, which does not even exist on most maps. And it wasn't a town, but more like a township, just a 20 mile area between the creek named Dutch Buffalo and Irish Buffalo Creek, which ran from south of the Yadkin River to where the two Buffalo Creeks join Rocky Creek. Many records just denote locations by the name of the county. When the first settlers arrived at Dutch Buffalo Creek, it was in Bladen County, which began in eastern North Carolina and reached clear to the western border of Tennessee, covering the whole frontier. By 1750, Dutch Buffalo Creek belonged to the almost equally giant Anson County, which was created when Bladen got a western boundary. In 1762 it was in Mecklenburg County, and then Cabarrus County in 1792. Sources use all of these designations, and often interchangeably.

OK. That's my mea culpa and my warning to read with caution. I've had great fun researching and writing this. Enjoy.

Family Tree


Johannes (John) Hagler 1716-1772
Barbara Clontz 1725-1777
Johann Heinrich Seitz 1708-1766
Elizabeth Felsinger 1713-1765
Jacob Isaac 1750-1844
Anna Barbara 1753-1828
Henry 1754-
James 1755-1808
Catherine 1758-
Peter 1760-1832
Leonard 1760-1732
Mary 1761-
Phillip 1766-1854
Paul 1768-
Abraham 1770-1843
Elizabeth Hagler 1771-1848
Palatine Region, now Germany Immigrated 1748
Michael Christman 1730-1780
Michael 1763-1830
George Christman 1765-1850
Johanetta Hardt 1730-1766
Caterana 1732-1819
Susanna 1732-1829
Andrew 1734-1806
Phillip 1736-1813
Jacob 1739-1816
Elizabeth Seits 1741-1784
Margaret 1745-1830
Michael 1747-1833
Christian 1748-1800
Capt. Peter 1750-1839
Henry 1789-1842
John 1791-1848
Michael 1793-1875
George 1795-1870
Barbara Maria 1797-1882
Jacob 1798-1861
Caty 1800-1883
David 1803-1887
Peter 1805-1835
2 more wives: Annis Kniffen & Catherine Riggs
Jehu Hill 1789-1863
Patsy Carlin 1795-1834
4 more wives: Mary G. Pearson, Ellen Wilcox, Louisa Christina Bischoff, Christina Amelia Hessell
Charles Crismon 1807-1890
James 1809-1852
William 1812-1860
Emanuel 1812-1895
Mary "Polly" Hill 1814-1892
Emily 1815-1882
Jane 1818-1906
Elizabeth 1818-1882
Franklin 1823-1855
Adeline 1831-1907
John Morgan 1832-1881
Martha Jane 1831-1919
George C. 1833-1908
Esther Ann Crismon 1836-1893
Samantha 1840-1899
Mary Ann 1842-1906
Charles Jr. 1844-1882
Emily 1847-1913
John 1852-1907
Cynthia 1854-1926
Walter 1856-1939
Bold Text = my family line

Christman/Bobbitt/Jones Intermarriages



Family members who moved from Christian County, Kentucky to Morgan County, Illinois are **in bold font.**

*came later around 1830, the rest in 1827

Barbara and Stephen Bobbitt's son James Granville Bobbitt married Charles Crismon's sister-in-law Elizabeth Hill in 1841.

Chapter One -- Michael Christmann

The first German speaking settlers in America were mostly Quakers, who had come through New York. Most settled in Philadelphia, which was to became the most important American immigrant destination in the 1700s, not only for Quakers, but for all Europeans despite the facts that the city is 110 miles from the ocean and 200 miles farther from Europe than New York City for travelers, and that the Delaware River often froze. A quarter million German speaking immigrants arrived there before 1873, and over a million after that.

But the German speakers didn't actually come from Germany as we now think of it. In 1749 there was no single country called Germany, but many tiny principalities, each with its own royal family. The borders and rulers were constantly rearranging themselves with each of the scores of European wars. It was not until the late 1800s that Otto von Bismarck unified many of the German speaking kingdoms into Prussia. Hitler later sought to extend Bismarck's work by annexing much of Europe, which the victorious Allies reduced after World War II to create the present nation. These maps illustrate the configurations of the region in 1700, 1900, and 2000 AD. The green star in each map shows approximately where Michael Christmann was born.

A large percentage of the German speaking immigrants to America in the eighteenth century, including Michael Christmann, came from a single area known as the Palatine Region. We would call it the Rhineland. This was a group of tiny kingdoms surrounding the Rhine River.

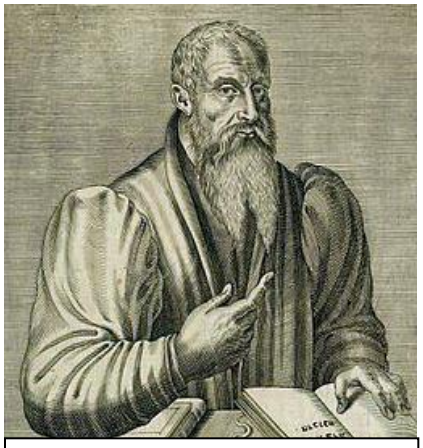
I've tried to understand why a single small part of the German speaking world made such a large portion of American immigrants. One important factor was poverty resulting from the terrible destruction of the Rhineland after Louis XIV occupied it during the Nine Years' War in 1689-97. He controlled the land and principalities along the Rhine from south of Mainz to the Swiss border. When the German Princes united to evict him, he adopted a scorched earth policy and burned the major cities of Heidelberg, Mannheim, Oppenheim, Worms, Speyer, and Bingen to the ground, and also destroyed over 20 towns and many villages. At the time of Michael Christmann, the area did not really belong to any of the competing Germanic powers of Austria, Bavaria, or Prussia. The principalities of the Rhineland were independent, but administered through a peaceful agreement with neighboring Bavaria, which explains why the baptismal records of the period give the country as "Bayern."

Beginning in 1717, ship captains docking at Philadelphia were required to submit passenger lists. These are available in an out-of-print nineteenth century book, which I was able to buy for $.99 from Kindle.[5] I learned that in the single year of 1749, 22 ships with 7,000 immigrants from the Rhineland made the seven-week voyage to the city. In total, 70,000 Germans landed there before the American Revolution. Among them were two immigrants with the same name, who arrived just one day apart.

According to Charles H. Crismon's excellent biography of Charles Crismon,[6] his grandfather Michael Christmann arrived from the Palatinate as a teenager by way of Amsterdam aboard the ship *Two Brothers*. That is verified in the published immigration record for September 15, 1748. But, dated just one day later is another list of German speaking immigrants that arrived in the ship *Patience* from Rotterdam, which also included a Michael Christman, spelled slightly differently. Searching birth records in the Palatine area, I was able to find precisely two Michael Christmanns of the appropriate age. One was baptized June 18, 1730 in Steinwenden, Bayern. His parents were Michel and Susanna Christmann. The other Michael was born in Otterback, Kaiserslautern, Bayern to Hermeti and M. Magdalena Christman. Although living in two different countries, the two families lived only 17 km (10 miles) apart. I don't think that the minor spelling difference of their names is strong enough evidence to link either of the Michaels to a specific town or set of parents, so there appears to be no way to reliably extend our family line without additional information.[7]

Since our Michael may have been trained as a millwright, perhaps research on the occupations of the two possible Palatine fathers could yield an important clue. We do know that both Michaels came to America unaccompanied and were not likely married at the time. And both were teenagers, as the family story suggests.

While searching genealogical records of Germany, I discovered that the surname Christmann and its variants are fairly common, but seem to be concentrated in the Palatine area. Lonnie Chrisman at Chrisman.org says the name comes originally from Pfungstadt, which is 92 km northeast of Kaiserslautern near Frankfurt. It is the most common surname in that town, spelled Crößmann. That may be so, but I have traced the spelling of Christmann pretty far back in other Palatine towns using the more familiar spelling. In the process I found two famous men named Christmann. One was Jakob Christmann, who was born in Heidelberg in 1554. He was Jewish, which seems odd with a name that literally means man of Christ, but he converted to Lutheranism before he turned 14 in 1568. Perhaps he adopted the Christmann name at that time. Jakob was a prodigy, who became a professor of Hebrew and the leading European expert on Arabic. He published a well-known book on learning the Arabic language, believing it necessary to fully



Jakob Christmann 1554-1613

[5] Professor I. Daniel Rupp, *A collection of upwards of 30,000 names of German, Swiss, Dutch, French and other Immigrants in Pennsylvania from 1727-1776*, I.G. Kohler, Philadelphia, 1876.

[6] Charles H. Crismon, *Charles Crismon Western Pioneer,* 1992

[7] The many different spellings of Christman are a problem for me in writing this book. My convention will be to generally use Christman for American non-Mormon family members and Crismon for Mormons, but to employ the actual spelling used in any referenced sources such as in the paragraph above.

understand the Greek classics, which had been preserved in that language during the dark ages. As a leading scholar, he inherited a valuable library of manuscripts and astronomical instruments from a colleague, which led him to an interest in astronomy and a correspondence with Johannes Kepler. One of the manuscripts that Jakob Christmann owned was the original manuscript written by Copernicus on the earth's rotation around the sun. Jakob died June 16, 1613. The Copernicus document is now safely in a museum library in Cracow, with Christmann's personal notations still visible in the margins. The other famous Christmann was a theologian in Augsburg named Wolfgang Jakob Christmann.

A Crismon family legend has it that Michael Christmann's father was a military officer of Frederick the Great of Prussia, whom the king had sent to America as a spy. After trying to verify that story I find it fairly unlikely, though possible. In 1740 Frederick the Great became King of Prussia at the age of 28 and inherited an army of 80,000 men unrivaled in discipline and firepower. The Palatine was not one of Frederick's scattered lands, but the Electorate of Bavaria was his ally in 1741 when he marched on Prague, and as I mentioned, at that time Bavaria had an administration agreement with the Palatine principalities. It seems possible that Michael's father could have entered into the military service of a foreign sovereign by that route. But as far I can tell from my reading on Frederick the Great, the king was wholly occupied with war against Austria over Silesia in Eastern Europe until the end of 1745, during which time he would have had little interest in colonizing America. However there seems to have followed about a decade without serious wars, in which that interest could possibly have changed. But I could find no evidence that it did.

The spy story seems unlikely to me for another reason. Both Michaels seemed to be traveling as single teenagers without family. It is possible that our Michael joined his father in America before or after his own voyage, but I have found no evidence of that.

When Michael Christmann stepped off the ship, Philadelphia was learning how to be a grown up city after several decades of struggle with a depression in the 1720s, trouble absorbing immigrants, riots over bread prices, drunken sailors, pickpockets, and poor government. Garbage and animals clogged the muddy and unpaved streets. But by 1748, Independence Hall was under construction, the streets were paved and lighted by oil lamps, and Benjamin Franklin's Union Fire Company had been in operation for 12 years.

Most German immigrants of the time came as indentured servants known as redemptioners, who needed to work off the borrowed price of passage, so it seems likely that both young Michael Christmanns stayed at least for a few years in or near Philadelphia.

I am aware of no family information that claims Michael Christmann was a millwright, but for a number of reasons I believe that he may have been. First, we know for certain that his son George was a millwright when he arrived in Illinois decades later. George settled his adult sons, who were also millers, on several streams in Morgan County to make their living. There will be more on that in subsequent chapters. And later his grandson, Charles Crismon, hauled millstones in his wagon along the pioneer trail in 1847 to build the first gristmill in Utah in City Creek Canyon and built many more mills in his lifetime.

In colonial times, the many secrets of milling were carefully guarded and passed from father to son. There was no way to begin milling without having learned it on the job. I know that Charles learned it from his father, George. If not from Michael, where did George learn it? It seems possible that Michael

indentured himself to a miller in Philadelphia. Even then, the Pennsylvania Quakers were well known for their mills (think Quaker Oats). But even that may not have adequately prepared him for the business unless he had received family or apprenticeship training in the old country. Rowan County, North Carolina was already known for its excellent millstone quarries, which may have started Michael in that direction. Also, an additional 50 acres and exemption from militia duty were offered to immigrants to North Carolina who were millers. Finally, I have discovered a 1789 map that seems to show a Christman mill on a branch of Dutch Buffalo Creek. I will discuss that later.

I wondered why our Michael went to North Carolina of all places, but after learning more about the history of that time, it seems logical to me.

Although Christopher Columbus probably sighted the coast that became known as Carolina, the region was never colonized by Spain. They abandoned any hope of it in 1560 after being rebuffed by Native Americans. The first Europeans to settle there came through a charter given by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Walter Raleigh. His two settlements failed, including the infamous Roanoke Island Colony, which disappeared with barely a trace. The first successful white settlement in Carolina was by Virginians migrating down the coast in 1653, but for about 60 years they were mostly confined to Albemarle County in the northeast corner of the colony. In 1663 a royal charter was issued by King Charles II to eight investors called Lords Proprietors to rule in Carolina and part of what is now Florida. These men had helped Charles to return in 1660 from exile in France to re-establish the British monarchy after the demise of Oliver Cromwell. The Lords Proprietors were businessmen, who basically governed that vast area as absolute rulers, granting land in the new world as political favors and to induce immigration and population of their territory. In 1729 seven of the eight Lords sold the land back to young King George II, after which he and his son George III governed North Carolina as a royal colony until the American Revolution.

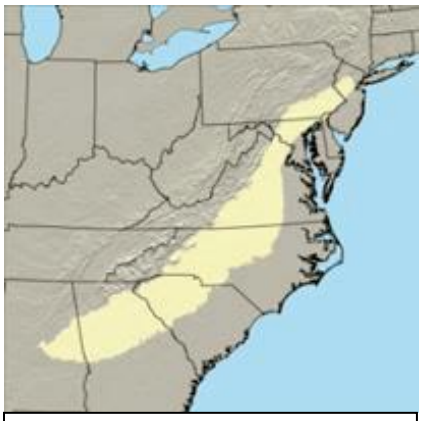
Any immigrant who submitted to a legal process with the Proprietors and later with the King's representatives, the colonial governors, could obtain land. The first phase was an application showing a specific plot, describing borders with the neighbors, and declaring possession. If no one contested the

claim after three months, a warrant would be issued to order a survey. The third step was to submit the survey, after which the plot of land would be granted. The land was free to the initial grantee except for a fee at each step of the process, and grantees were free to buy and sell their land grants. Of course, there were conditions. The grantee was required for the first 3-5 years to "seat" his land (clear and plant a specific number of acres) and annually pay what was called a quitrent. This could be in alternative currency such as peppercorns or Indian wampum. Or it could be in produce, or sometimes in specie (real money, which was incredibly scarce). Any further sales of the property were handled by the respective county, which recorded and issued deeds similar to current practice.

Beginning in 1667 under the Proprietors, every free immigrant was eligible for 40 acres plus 20 for each slave or servant. Freemen with a gun and powder qualified for 100 acres. Bigger grants were given as political gifts, generally under 700 acres. Enforcing these rules was difficult and the source of much negative interaction between parties, which could include violence and lawsuits. Settlement by individual families was the rule, but there were several large holdings of wilderness, which were developed by land speculators. By 1715 grantees were given certain rights including a poverty exemption for failure to "seat" or pay quitrent. In that year all existing grants were declared valid and all previously un-granted squatter claims based on seven years of occupancy were deemed legal.

The first large group of permanent settlers in North Carolina came from Germanic people. In 1710, possibly in response to desperate conditions at home due to the French King's depredations, several thousand Swiss and Germanic immigrants from the Palatinate settled at New Bern on the Carolina coast. Many of them were massacred by Indians in 1712, but the population at New Bern in 1717 had rebounded to reach 2,000, and in 1729, 13,000. It became the first seat of colonial government in the colony, which in 1729 was divided into North and South Carolina.

After the Carolinas became colonies the rules changed. New immigrants from Europe were granted 50 acres for themselves plus an equal number for any family member or friend for which they had paid passage. Under royal colonial governors representing the landlord king, the land granting process became sporadic, uneven, and contentious. Many claims were poorly recorded and many settlers fell deeply into arrears in their rents. This unrest was a big factor in the Regulator uprising, which I'll describe later, and caused frustrations felt by many historians to be a major cause for the Revolution.



Piedmont Region is in yellow.
(Map from Wikipedia)

Beginning in about 1740 a stream of Scotch/Irish and German speaking immigrants from Pennsylvania and Virginia moved southward along the so-called Piedmont section of the colonies, which extended from Pennsylvania through the more western part of North Carolina clear into Alabama. Prior to the arrival of the European settlers and their plows, the Piedmont region had been a vast open prairie roamed by bison. It is the higher plateau of low, rolling hills between the Atlantic Coastal plain and the Blue Ridge Mountains, the easternmost range of the Appalachians. The Piedmont is about 300 miles wide in North Carolina.

One historian wrote:

> *Around 1744 the first Germans to arrive in the Mecklenburg area were named Barringer, Smith, and Dry* (the names appear to have been anglicized from Behringer, Schmidt and Drey)*, former indentured servants from Pennsylvania, who migrated down the old buffalo trail, the Indian trading path to the Yadkin River. There they found the best spots already taken by the Scotch/Irish, so they turned left, following the right bank of the Yadkin, finally located on the high ground between the present Cold Water and Buffalo Creeks.* (That was then Bladen County.) *By the next year news of good land reached Germany, bringing many, especially from the Palatinate.*

The author praised the Germans, calling them hardy, self-reliant, frugal, and courageous. They fully supported campaigns against the Indians.[8] This is the exact area where Michael claimed his land a decade later. There is no doubt that Buffalo Creek was renamed Dutch Buffalo Creek because of the German-speaking community there. The smaller branch, Irish Buffalo Creek, was just a few miles to the west. It isn't hard to figure out who had settled there.

The first permanent settling of the area now known as Charlotte, North Carolina was in 1748. By the mid-1750s, several European families and settlers had established a town at the junction of two major trading paths. This crossroads situated between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers and commonly referred to as "the square" would later become Charlotte's downtown hub. The first Bladen County[9] land grants were issued in 1749. There were hundreds more between 1750 and 1758.

The people of the area traded with the port city of Charleston, South Carolina, sending tallow, cheese, butter, hides, whiskey, and brandy. They also drove cattle to Charleston and even to Philadelphia. Their houses typically had one room, one door, and one window, which if lucky, sometimes contained glass. The floors were dirt. A family might have had 50 head of cattle, three or four horses, 20 hogs, and a few sheep and geese. There were tanneries, watermills to grind wheat and corn, and saw mills as early as 1767. Most farmers had a distillery as it was cheaper to transport whiskey than grain. There were taverns along public roads to lodge travelers. Gambling was permitted, but not swearing. After 1674, numerous fines were recorded for oaths, the amount corresponding to the number of curse words uttered.

The German speaking pioneers in the Buffalo Creek area at first held church services in barns, but once the first homes were established, they felt the need for instruction of their children in reading, writing and arithmetic along with knowledge of the Bible. Their first structure was a dual purpose log church and schoolhouse called the Dutch Buffalo Creek Meeting House. They could not call it a church, since only the Anglican Church was officially recognized in the colony. This arrangement lasted about 25 years, servicing both the Lutherans and German Reformed members, using lay preachers and the occasional itinerant minister. In 1750, Moravians, a German-speaking group from Bohemia (modern Czechoslovakia), bought 100,000 acres from Lord Granville in Surry County, 95 miles straight north of

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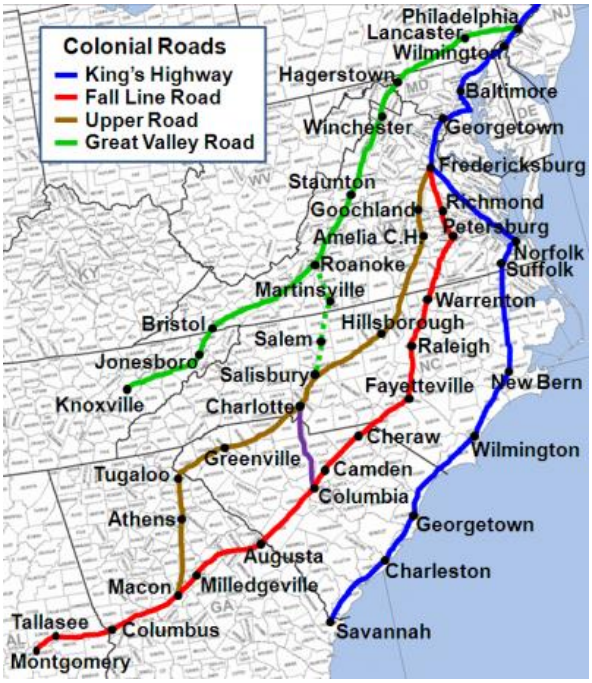
[8] Daniel Augustus Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte from 1740 to 1903* [Charlotte, NC: Observer Printing House, 1903], 28-32.

[9] The land between Cold Water Creek and Buffalo Creek belonged to five different counties, which were continually split as the population grew over the next fifty years. They were Bladen beginning in 1734, Anson in 1750, Rowan in 1753, Mecklenburg in 1762, and Cabarras in 1792. When I realized that, my research made much more sense. I will try to use the county name which was current at the time I am writing about.

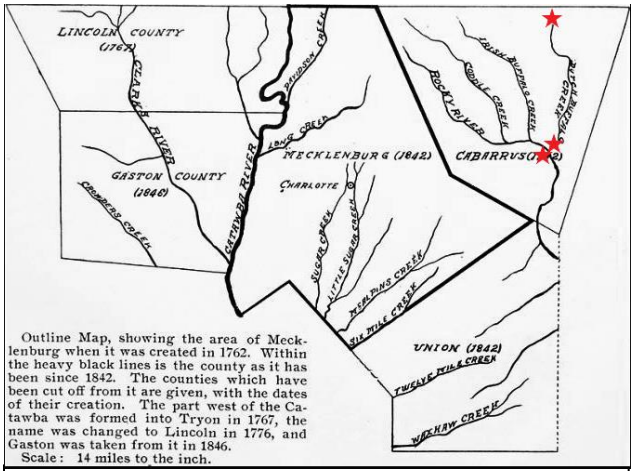
Charlotte. About this time there also began a northward migration toward Charlotte from South Carolina.



It was probably around 1753 that Michael Christman arrived in Rowan County. If my assumption about his birth date is correct, he would have been about 23 years old and single. He likely traveled down the Piedmont via the Upper Road, a major route of immigration in those days. My guess is that when he left home for America he already had a plan to come south as soon as he could to join previous Germanic settlers, whom he may have known at home. If not, it is hard for me to imagine why he didn't simply settle in Pennsylvania, which already had a large German population including most of the immigrants named Christman.

There is a serious error in some pedigrees regarding Michael Christman. In Family Search he has been confounded with Johan Michael Christman, possibly a man who arrived in Philadelphia a year later. Johan Michael Christman's grave is 56 miles away from Dutch Buffalo Creek in Catawba County. Find-a-grave gives his death date as November 25, 1780, which proves that he is not our Michael, who died defending his property in Dutch Buffalo Creek, necessarily before his murderer's death on August 16, 1780. I'll have more on that later.

Michael Christman settled in Anson County on Dutch Buffalo Creek, where the three original German speaking immigrants mentioned above had located in 1744. Since most of Michael's neighbors in Philadelphia and North Carolina were native German speakers, it is possible that Michael spoke little English. We'll, of course, never know. Family history writers don't address that possibility directly, but some assert that even his son George spoke with a thick German accent.


LINCOLN COUNTY (1762)
CATAWBA RIVER
LONG CREEK
MECKLENBURG (1842)
CABARRUS (1792)
ROCKY RIVER
GASTON COUNTY (1846)
CHARLOTTE
SUGAR CREEK
LITTLE SUGAR CREEK
IRWIN CREEK
SIX MILE CREEK
UNION (1842)
TWELVE MILE CREEK
WAXHAW CREEK
Outline Map, showing the area of Mecklenburg when it was created in 1762. Within the heavy black lines is the county as it has been since 1842. The counties which have been cut off from it are given, with the dates of their creation. The part west of the Catawba was formed into Tryon in 1767, the name was changed to Lincoln in 1776, and Gaston was taken from it in 1846.
Scale: 14 miles to the inch.

The stars approximately mark the Christman properties

At about the time of Michael's arrival in North Carolina, Lt. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia was ordering 21 year old George Washington to lead the Virginia militia on a mission deep into the Ohio River territory to confront the French and their Native American allies. George Washington's surprise attack on a French force and subsequent surrender to the French at the Battle of Fort Necessity on May 28, 1754 helped to spark the French and Indian War. This war was just a prelude, and in the English view, a sideshow to the Seven Years War in Europe which pitted Prussia and England against France, Austria, and Russia.

The third North Carolina Provincial Congress met in Hillsboro on August 20, 1755. Rowan County sent six delegates. Resistance to taxes imposed by the Royal Governor was pushing North Carolina to become a patriot base for the American Revolution, and Loyalist elements were already beginning to be suppressed.

Around 1760 Michael Christman married Elizabeth Seits. There is no primary documentation of this marriage nor any reliable information on Elizabeth's family. The best source that I have on her is this statement made by his grandson, Samuel Widener Jacob Crestman, in a personal notebook sometime before 1891.

> *My daddy's name was Michael Christman. My mother was named Elizabeth Wydner. Grandpap's name was also Michael. Grandma's name was Elizabeth Seits. Grandpap Michael was killed in North Carolina by rogues. Grandpap Michael came from Wuethenberg (sic) to Philadelphia to Rowan County, North Carolina.*

I spent weeks trying to learn more about Michael's wife. It seemed likely to me, that like Michael, Elizabeth Seits was an immigrant from a German speaking country, though her birthplace has been indicated in some family trees as North Carolina. She was too old to have been born in Rowan County, which had not been settled yet, and the early Dutch and German immigrants in North Carolina were concentrated on the coast, many miles away. Before her family arrived in America, their name was probably spelled Seitz. I began by investigating the records of the counties around the Mecklenburg area for the name of Seitz and its variants during the period from her birth around 1740 and 1800.

There were many, mostly spelled Sides or Sites, homophones for Seitz. I also found many other variants including Sitis, Sitz, Sights, Seyts, etc. With the help of property records, historical writings, the very first census of the United States government in 1790, and speculative, mostly un-sourced family pedigrees, I was able to determine that all of them seem to belong to two families, who came to America from towns only 34 miles apart located in two different German speaking countries on opposite sides of the Rhine River. One family, headed by Johann "Adam" Seitz, a tailor from Baden-Wurttenburg, and his wife Catherina Susannah Schaeufele, settled in what is now Lincoln County about 72 miles west of Dutch Buffalo Creek around 1750. The other Seitz family was headed by Johannes Heinrich Seitz (also known as Henry Sides) and Dorothea Elizabeth Felsinger of Rhodt-unter-Rietburg in the Rhineland, who settled on Killian Creek, about 40 miles west of Charlotte, over a decade before the city was incorporated in 1768. This family sailed to America in 1738, but first settled in Lower Saucon, Bucks (now Northampton) County, Pennsylvania before arriving in Rowan County, North Carolina ten years later. Both families, but especially Heinrich and Dorothea, had children who later settled in Dutch Buffalo Creek. Neither of their known genealogies contained a daughter named Elizabeth, but there was an age gap among Heinrich and Dorothea's children that could accommodate her. Then I found what I think is a decisive clue, a property grant for a piece of land that had been worked jointly by Michael Christman and Henry Sights, which I think is the anglicized name of Elizabeth's older brother Heinrich Seitz, son of Henry Sides.

Here's the story of that family as nearly as I can figure. Heinrich Sr. and Dorothea married in Meisenheim, Rheinland-Pfalz January 7, 1731, but spent much of the next nine years in Holland. I don't know details of that nor his profession, or even his age for sure. They sailed to America aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* September 16, 1738 with five children under six years old (assuming their birth information is accurate) and with Dorothea's parents, Andreas and Margaretha Felsinger, who were 51 and 46. That was a particularly bad year for sailing the Atlantic, which earned the nickname of "year of

the avenging angels." Imagine the dangers of crossing more than a hundred years earlier than the fabled Mormon Pioneer voyages from Europe.

Ten years later, Henry and Dorothy (as they were then known), left the Felsingers in Pennsylvania and made their way to North Carolina with nine children ages 0-16 including my 5th great grandmother Elizabeth, who was then seven years old. An 18 year old adopted daughter named Johanetta Hardt was left with the grandparents, but she joined them several years later with her husband John "Dutchman" Cagle. Henry and Dorothy's last child, Peter Seits, was born after they settled on Killian Creek.

Little is known about them during the next few years, but as the older children married, many of them moved to Dutch Buffalo Creek to claim land among the many German speaking settlers there including Michael Christman.

A land claim was recorded for Michael Christman on December 12, 1760. The next year Elizabeth's brother Andrew made a claim. Both were probably in Dutch Buffalo Creek. I think it is reasonable to assume that Michael and Andrew were acquainted and that Michael had met Elizabeth through that association.

The next year, 1761, featured serious Indian trouble. It resulted in a campaign that united all the local militia units in an effort that "broke the Cherokees forever" and forced friendship with the whites. No further Indian trouble was recorded in the area after 1763.

Mecklenburg County came into being on December 11, 1762. I read a copy of the decree that outlined the eastern border of the new county, which had been carved out of Anson County. It began at the "corner of Captain Charles Hart's plantation on Buffalo Creek, extended six miles northeast from there to the mouth of Clear Creek, which empties into Rocky River below Captain Alexander's, thence due south to South Carolina." From this I surmise that there was a plantation in Michael's neighborhood in addition to the immigrant farmers' houses.

Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg

The name of the county was to honor the young queen of George III. When the 22 year old king succeeded to the throne in 1760 he married the 17 year old Princess Sophia Charlotte of the small German duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in Mirow. The Earl of Harcourt was sent to bring her to England for the wedding. The voyage was difficult, encountering three storms and lasting over three weeks. Anson County had been previously named after the sea captain who brought her safely to England. At the time the county was named, the Queen was not yet 20 years old, but had borne George IV, the heir to the throne and a second son to the king. She went on to bear 15 children. To make the honor even greater, the county seat was named Charlotte after her. Evidently in 1763 there was still significant support in North Carolina for the English King, or at least for his queen. It probably did not hurt to have a large population of German speaking colonists in the area. Even George III had German roots. He is said to have been the first of the three generations of Hanoverian Kings in Britain to speak without a German accent.

Three months later the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War, and the British began to take over Canada and the so-called Northwest Territory west of the Appalachians. That October, George III angered the colonists by banning them from settling there, an order that they largely ignored.

It was around 1763 that Michael and Elizabeth Christman had their first child, whom they named Michael. In 1764, Elizabeth's younger brother Christian Sides bought 107 acres on Buffalo Creek and Rocky River.

In 1764 a government survey erroneously placed the southern border of North Carolina 11 miles too far south extending west from Charlotte, which assigned 600 square miles of South Carolina territory to the wrong state. Another contested survey produced the "notch" in the border south of Charlotte. This provoked serious unrest along the disputed area including episodes of armed conflict. The situation was not completely resolved until 1815.

The first slave trade recorded in Mecklenburg County was in 1764, an African man who sold for 75£. Few of the small time farmers in the area could afford slaves, but things were changing. The county was thriving.

In 1765, money was raised for a county courthouse, prison, and stocks. The first courthouse was a log cabin, built on ten-foot tall brick pillars. This tradition of raising the courthouse or main town market building above ground level was borrowed from England, and provided an open space at the center of town that could be used for the selling of animals, produce and other goods. Additionally, in the center of the open space, a post was driven into the ground to mark the middle of town, from which distances to other towns, river fords, and other destinations could be measured.

On March 19th a Stamp Act was passed by Parliament on paper goods and legal documents. The community was exchanging a mishmash of coins from any government when they could get them, posting prices in English pounds. But in truth, there was little money of any type in circulation at the time, which made paying government taxes an inconvenience if not a near impossibility. To ease the money shortage, the government established a barter system, setting fixed equivalents of tobacco, butter, tar, feathers, deer skins, beef, pork, and wheat to be equivalent to a British pound.

On April 6, 1765 Michael Christman was granted 340 acres of land on Dutch Buffalo Creek by William Tryon, Lt. Governor of North Carolina on behalf of King George III. The grant was recorded in Wilmington, North Carolina two days later. Michael's land was about 30 miles northeast of Charlotte, adjoining George Tucker and John Lippard. The grant described the land as "on the north branches of Dutch Buffalo Creek." Note the plural. The north end of the property was on the county line "...including his own and Henry Sights' improvements." I believe Henry was Heinrich Seitz, Elizabeth's brother who had been born in 1734, and crossed the Atlantic at the age of four years. Evidently the two men developed the land together, or possibly Henry let Michael assume a claim that he had begun. Michael and Elizabeth had been married about two years by then. Tucker had made a claim November 16, 1764 on the north side of Dutch Buffalo on the main middle fork of 12 mile creek. John Lippard had been born in 1734 in the Palatinate and was a neighbor to two Goodman brothers, Michael and George, in the 1800 census.

On May 1, 1765 George Christman was born to Michael and Elizabeth.[10] Both George and Michael Jr. were mentioned in the sale contract for the family land in 1787, which I'll cover in the next chapter. The document gives the history of the land and describes both young men as Michael's sons. In 18 years of marriage it would seem likely that Elizabeth had several more children. Many family pedigrees mention a daughter named Margaret, who supposedly lived from 1776 to 1830 and married a man named Jacob or James Reynolds. One genealogist at Ancestry.com names four more Christman children named Samuel, John, Jacob, and Barbara, but without providing birth dates, places, or any sources. I have searched all census records of the period for additional Christman children in North and South Carolina without finding a single candidate, nor could I find any marriage documentation of Margaret or Barbara, so I am assuming that they didn't exist. If they did, they may have died young. It is rare to find death records for that time and place, especially for children.

Sometime that year, young George Christman's future father-in-law, Johannes (John) Hagler, bought 255 acres on Rocky River and Dutch Buffalo Creek. There is also a county record of reimbursement to Hagler for supplying provisions to Indians in December, 1758 and on his service on a jury in 1761, so he had been around for several years already. The location of John Hagler's land was very close to where George owned property in 1797, which I'll discuss in the next chapter.

The population of Mecklenburg County reached 5,000 in 1765 and grew to 6,000 in the next two years.

On July 8, 1766 Elizabeth's father, Johannes Heinrich Seits (Henry Sides) died in Mecklenburg, probably on his farm at Killian Creek.

The southeastern corner of the county merging with the Dutch Buffalo Creek settlement was formerly the tribal ground of the flathead Waxhaw Indians, who were pushed out by 1720 by small pox and by conflict with the European settlers, although some remained on a reservation. Around 1742, Andrew Pickens settled on the deserted Waxhaw land and saw an opportunity, hiring land agents to recruit "the best immigrants" to which land was sold. It was named Waxhaw and it quickly became populated by settlers from northern colonies, from coastal South Carolina, and a considerable number from Mecklenburg County including German speaking families from Dutch Buffalo Creek. The area was considered to be part of Bladen County, North Carolina until 1749, when Anson County was formed, and then Mecklenburg until it became part of South Carolina when the border issue was resolved.

The following account is from the journal of Charles Woodmason,[11] an itinerant episcopal minister on his visit to the Waxhaw settlement on January 30, 1767. It gives an idea of the roughness of the local settlers in the western Carolinas, the lack of adequate government, and the vigilante means they used to protect themselves. This may help to explain the rough treatment that the Christmans received a few years later.

> *This is a very fruitful fine spot, through which the dividing line between North and South Carolina runs — The heads of P.D.* (Pee Dee) *River, Lynch's Creek, and many other creeks take their rise in*

[10] The census records of George's time just give age ranges, not the year of birth. All except two support a birth year of 1765 and so do several secondary sources such as millennium file. However, the 1830 census gives a range of 1761-1770 and the 1840 census gives 1770-1780. Taken together these would give a birth year of 1770. All of the other census ranges would also accommodate that year. If so, there was actually an eight year gap in age between the two brothers.

[11] https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-journal-of-reverand-charles-woodmason/

> *this quarter, so that (a) finer body of land is nowhere to be seen, but it is occupied by a set of the most lowest vilest crew breathing Scotch Irish Presbyterians from the North of Ireland...This tract of land being most surprisingly thick settled beyond any spot in England of its extent.... Without laws or government churches schools or ministers — no police established — and all property quite insecure — merchants as fearful to venture their goods as ministers their persons — The lands, though the finest in the province (remain) unoccupied, and rich men (are) afraid to set slaves to work to clear them, lest they should become a pretty to the Banditti... No regard had to the numberless petitions and complaints of the people. Thus neglected and slighted by those in authority, they rose in Arms, pursued the Rogues, broke up their gangs — burnt the dwellings of all their harbourers and abettors — whipped and drove the idle, vicious, and profligate out of the province.*

The good minister, educated in England, was appalled at the primitive nature of the settlers. Regarding the citizens of a nearby county, he wrote later that year:

> *Their ignorance and impudence is so very high, as to be past bearing. Very few can read, fewer can write...They are very poor — owing their extreme indolence for they possess the finest country in America, and could raise but everything. They delight in their present low, lazy, sluttish, heathenish, hellish life, and seem not desirous of changing it. Both men and women will do anything to come at liquor, cloths, furniture rather than work for it. Hence their many vices — their gross licentiousness wantonness, lasciviousness, rudeness, lewdness, and profligacy they will commit the grossest enormities, before my face, and laugh at all admonition....The men with only a thin shirt and pair of breeches or trousers on — barelegged and barefooted, the women bareheaded barelegged and barefoot with only a thin shift and under petticoat. Yet I cannot break them of this — for the heat of the weather admits not of any but thin clothing — I can hardly bear the weight of my whig (wig) and gown, during service. The young women have a most uncommon practice, which I cannot break them of. They draw their shift as tight as possible to the body, and pin it close, to shew the roundness of their breasts, and slender waists (for they are generally finely shaped) and draw their petticoat close to their hips to shew the fineness of their limbs so that they might as well be in puri naturalibus. Indeed nakedness is not censurable or indecent here, and they expose themselves and their hair with bears oil and tying it up behind in a bunch like the Indians — being hardly one degree removed from them. In a few years, I hope to bring about a reformation, as I already have done in several parts of the country.*

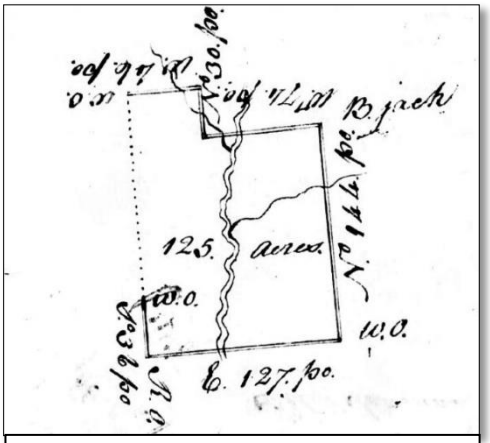
Andrew Jackson, the future seventh president of the United States, was born just six weeks after the preacher's visit on March 15, 1767 at Waxhaw. There is no doubt that he became a hero to the Christman family over the coming decades, as we shall see, although I think it is unlikely that he was acquainted personally with them. Jackson left the area when he and George were only teenagers, and their homes were over 20 miles apart. However, Michael Christman Jr. married a Waxhaw girl, Elizabeth Weidner, in 1783 when Jackson would have been 15, so it is possible. Years later, as a middle aged man, George Christman followed Jackson into the War of 1812 and eventually settled into Jacksonville, Illinois, a frontier town named for the famous general after he lost his first bid for the presidency.

The next year Mecklenburg was divided to create Tryon County from its west end. By then, three Virginia families named Starns moved to settle in Mecklenburg near Cane Creek. They had gotten a look at the country when they came through as a detachment of the Southwest Virginia militia for the

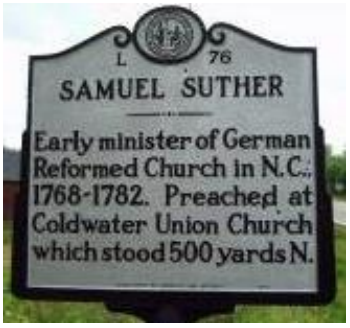
Cherokee Expedition of 1759-60. John Starns was later to become a judge in the Charlotte courthouse, and around 1778 he became a captain in a branch of the Mecklenburg militia and fought in the Revolutionary War for two years. There will be more on him later.[12]

The city of Charlotte was incorporated in 1768.

On December 23, 1768 a survey was ordered "on the waters of Dutch Buffalo Creek" for another grant to Michael Christman of 125 acres. This land was on the waters of Dutch Buffalo Creek where it ran from the north onto Rocky River, very much like the description of the acreage of Elizabeth's brother Christian. The document added: "including an improvement he bought of William Ryman." It sounds like he bought Ryman out of a claim that he had established and probably got a dwelling of some sort. Here he was a neighbor to George Tucker, Conrad Corlaugh, and John Michael Claun. This land was probably adjacent to Michael's 340 acres on the county line, as Tucker was his neighbor in both places. Tucker eventually developed a large plantation. He also owned property on both sides of Rocky River. A couple decades later gold was discovered near Tucker's property on the east side of Rocky River.



Michael's second property grant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SAMUEL SUTHER
Early minister of German Reformed Church in N.C.: 1768-1782. Preached at Coldwater Union Church which stood 500 yards N.

In 1769 Michael sold some of his land on Dutch Buffalo Creek to Rev. Samuel Suther, who became the community's first resident minister.[13] Suther was a Swiss born minster of the Lutheran and German Reformed Churches, who had immigrated on the *Oliver* in 1738, which wrecked at Virginia Beach. Suther, then 18 years old, was rescued on the beach and eventually made his way to Philadelphia, where he had evidently been educated.

It is likely that the property sold by Michael was for building a church. There was already a Lutheran church in the town which been built in 1745. However, a 1789 map of the neighborhood shows two Lutheran church houses, one Standard Lutheran and the other Reformed. One of them was close to Michael's property. Suther was already preaching the general area when he bought the land from Michael. The year before the sale of the property, Suther had attracted the attention of Governor Tryon who heard him preach and ordered him to leave his post to preach to the

[12] Herman Starnes, H. Gerald Starnes, *Of Them that Left a Name Behind: A History of the Starnes Family's First 125 Years and Beyond in America*, Gateway Press, Monroe, N.C., 1983.

[13] I was unable to document this in land files. The fact is quoted from Lonnie Chrisman at Chrisman.org/immigrants/michael-tory.htm.

Rowan and Mecklenburg militias during the War of the Regulation.[14] Suther moved to Guilford in 1770, but many of his descendants still live in the Dutch Buffalo Creek area.

The Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770, greatly increasing tensions with the British government throughout all the colonies. The following year, an armed conflict between the Regulators of Mecklenburg County and Governor Tryon kindled local thoughts of independence. After putting down the rebellion with his guard of British soldiers, the governor required many citizens to take a loyalty oath to the crown. John Hagler had been asked to help Governor Tryon put down the Regulators. That got him branded a Loyalist and led to his losing his farm and mill.

A new governor, Josiah Martin, was sent by the British later that year and immediately clashed with the North Carolina Assembly when they repealed some taxes against his wishes and British policy. During the next two years there was much political unrest throughout North Carolina and especially in Mecklenburg County between Loyalist Tories and the Continentals, especially the Scot/Irish group. The German community tended not to take sides in the conflict, but was largely unable to avoid involvement.

Things got more personal for Mecklenburg County in 1773 when King George III vetoed a bill which had been passed two years earlier establishing a "seminary for learning" in Charlotte. The denial fomented increasing ill will toward the king. This animosity extended to His Majesty's new Governor Martin, who that December dismissed the assembly after being in session only a few days. On December 12th, far to the north, was the famous Boston Tea party.

The following April, 1774, North Carolina sent William Hooper to Philadelphia as a delegate to the Continental Congress, who was predicting the war by then. Governor Martin was preparing to board a British man-of-war for his personal safety, having lost all control of the North Carolina government. The colonies expected Britain to attempt to subdue them. The First Continental Congress in Philadelphia ended October 26, 1774.

In December a North Carolina Provincial Congress met in New Bern in defiance of the governor. Mecklenburg County residents, to that point still sorting out loyalties, declined to send representatives. Shortly thereafter, the Provincial Congress expelled the royal governor and began to suppress Loyalists.

On March 15, 1775, Daniel Boone and a group of about thirty men defied the King's order to stay east of the Appalachians and blazed a Wilderness Road leading from Virginia through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. The Shawnee aligned with the British to fight American settlers. Eight days later, Patrick Henry gave his famous liberty or death speech in Richmond, Virginia. On April 18th Paul Revere made his famous ride. The battles of Lexington and Concord happened the next day.

Mecklenburg County is said to have been the first government body in America to declare independence from the Crown of England on May 31, 1775. With the retreat of Governor Martin, the Royal government in North Carolina had ended. Any royal authority in Mecklenburg County had been absent for some time. Thomas Polk (brother to James K. Polk's grandfather), the military commander of the county, called a meeting of delegates from each local militia to meet May 19th at the courthouse. He expected 18 delegates, two from each militia, but about half of the men in the county showed up and

[14] The War of the Regulation or Regulator Movement ran from 1765 to 1771. Citizens had taken up arms against local colonial officials, whom they considered corrupt.

they had to reduce the crowd to 27 prominent citizens in order to draw up a consensus document. The colonies were preparing for war and Mecklenburg needed to take a stand. During the meeting a courier arrived on horseback reporting the battle of Lexington a month earlier. Immediately the group was galvanized to vote for independence. After some discussion about the propriety of breaking their loyalty oath to the governor, they decided that the oath was invalid due to the king's declaring the colonies to be in a state of insurrection. At 2 a.m. all 27 representatives signed their own Declaration of Independence, which was read the following day at the courthouse in the presence of several thousand persons, who cheered. I wonder whether Michael Christman might have been in the crowd. The document was sent in the hands of Captain James Jack, a local tavern keeper, to Philadelphia where the Continental Congress was in session. Two lawyers in nearby Salisbury named Dunn and Booth intercepted Jack and declared the declaration treasonous. But the attorneys were brought to Charlotte and punished for "unfaithfulness to the common cause." Their exact punishment was not recorded. Captain Jack arrived at Philadelphia on June 23, the very day that General Washington left to take command of the continental army, which had fought the British a week earlier at Bunker Hill.

Meanwhile, Governor Martin of North Carolina wrote from the British warship that the declaration of the Mecklenburg County convention "*surpasses all the horrid and treasonable publications....Its author and abettors will not escape my due notice whenever my hands are sufficiently strengthened to attempt the recovery of the lost authority of government.*" Eleven days later, the Mecklenburg group re-assembled to form a government. Each militia company chose two "selectmen." Each of these had jurisdiction over all matters of civil nature concerning less than twenty shillings. For more important matters up to forty shillings, the two selectmen sitting together would try cases. Each was assigned a constable with authority to confine any person accused of petit larceny. The eighteen selectmen in the county were to meet quarterly to try more serious cases and to hear appeals. The militias were advised to gather arms and hold themselves in readiness to execute the commands of the general Congress. Three hundred pounds of powder, six hundred pounds of lead and one thousand flints were purchased. Most other existing civil officers were reinstated, but were to report to the congress of militias rather than the governor.

Besides their early declaration of support, the people of Mecklenburg made another unique contribution. The Continentals were looking for serviceable weapons to supplant the old New England blunderbuss. At the outbreak of the war, there were only three rifle factories in the colonies, but one of them was in Charlotte. The iron was obtained nearby at High Shoals. They made long rifles with wooden stocks extending to the end of the barrel, which was four feet long. One of the Charlotte rifles was presented to General Washington in 1787, who praised it. It played an important part in the Revolutionary War.

On February 27, 1776 about a thousand North Carolina Patriot militia men won the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, defeating 1,600 Loyalist militia men from Cross Creek who had been called out by Governor Martin, and the Revolutionary War in North Carolina was on. This ended British authority in North Carolina and tremendously boosted Patriot morale. On April 12, 1776, ten months after Mecklenburg County's declaration, the North Carolina Congress convened to declare for independence, and instructed its representatives in Philadelphia, the first state to do so. Three months later was our new nation's first Independence Day, July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

There were official records which mentioned Michael Christman. In July, 1777, a Michael Cressman was appointed assessor...

> *by an Act of General Assembly of this state the Justices of the Peace for the County of Mecklenburg, (who) are authorized and required to Lay out the said county into Districts and to appoint assessors in each district respectively, for the purpose of laying a Tax on the Inhabitants thereof.* He served under John Shepard.[15]

On February 6, 1778 the French joined the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans.

In 1778 a court document noted: *State vs. Michael Christman: Missdm. Guilty as charged in the Indct* (indictment)*, Fined 2 pounds, 2d.*[16] There was no further information. I wonder what he did wrong.

By April, 1779, most continental terms of service had expired and many soldiers returned home. To replace them, 2,000 North Carolina militia men were sent to defend Charleston, South Carolina.

Sometime between Michael's misdemeanor fine in 1778 and August, 1780 he was killed. The family's understanding is that the murderer was an overzealous Patriot militia man named Captain Starns. I'm quite certain that this was the aforementioned John Starns of Cold Creek, who had served as a judge in Charlotte.

According to Lonny Chrisman, a certain Mr. Clark (who was a brother of General George Rogers Clark and William Clark, the explorer partner of Merriweather Lewis) recorded in his diary that Michael Christman was murdered in Dutch Buffalo Creek, North Carolina, because he was, or was mistaken for, a Tory, since he would not fight the British. His land was confiscated. Clark's diary did not give dates.[17]

In trying to learn more about this story, I found that William Clark actually had five older brothers, who served in the military. George Rogers Clark was the most famous, but he spent his entire career in north and western territories. The most likely brother to have been in North Carolina at that time would have been General Jonathan Clark, who may have passed through Charlotte in the winter of 1780 on his way to join the fight against the British at Charleston. He kept a diary throughout his career, which included letters from his younger brother William of his famous exploration looking for the Northwest Passage, which has been an important resource to historians. The diary has never been published, but the manuscript resides at the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, Kentucky. I was able to get a copy of the pages of the diary which covered the time from 1777 through 1780. It showed that Jonathan Clark traveled through the Mecklenburg area in the spring of 1780, but there was no mention of Michael Christman's killing.

The tragic killing seems senseless to me on several levels. In the first place, Michael was about 49 at the time, really getting too old be a military recruit. His sons were fourteen and sixteen years old—George was definitely too young to serve, though Michael Jr. may have been a target for recruitment. Given the fact that Michael was a native German, I find it hard to believe that he was a Tory. During that confusing period there were both Loyalist and Patriot militias patrolling Mecklenburg County. The two sides were competing for recruits and at times facing off in battle as they had at Moore's Creek Bridge, especially

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[15] Doris F. Brisco, *Mecklenburg Co., NC, Court Minutes Bk 1:1774-1780*.

[16] Rowan Co., NC register, 1986-1995, Vol 7, No. 2, May 1992, p. 1525, Salisbury Dist, State Docket, Superior Court, 1778, p. 15.

[17] www.Chrisman.org/immigrants/michael-tory.htm

later in the revolution. For example, in February, 1779 there was a Tory insurrection in Tryon County. The Mecklenburg militia crossed the county border to put it down. As the British General Cornwallis worked his way through the south, he frequently paused to send his regular troops in search of Loyalists to join his regulars.

Decades later, a historical article published in the *Charlotte Democrat*, written by R. Barringer, a grandson of one of Michael's neighbors, reported on Tory raids that had been made on the mostly German settlement at Dutch Buffalo Creek.

> *Another fact is well known: In the fiercest of the struggle, the German settlement in that outlying section, unprotected as it was, became exposed to the raids and depredations of the Tories. At one time a body of Tory soldiers under Col. Bryan from the forks of the Yadkin in Rowan, marched through the neighborhood, and laid it waste. At another time a desperate set of the "Fanning Gang" crossed the Yadkin from Randolph and swept the Buffalo settlement from the head of Little Buffalo, near the present Gold Hill, clear down to the mouth of Big Buffalo at Rocky River—a distance of more than twenty miles. They stole stock and money, and carried off many helpless citizens to Cheraw and Camden. Among the number were two old men—both very active and prominent among the early settlers, and both far beyond the military age. They were Caleb Blackwelder and his son-in-law John Paul Barringer. These men were taken from their beds at night and carried by an armed guard to Camden, where they were confined in a British prison many months.*

Obviously, the community received severe pressure from every direction and both parties to enlist. According to a Wikipedia article on the war in North Carolina, many Germans tried to remain neutral. In lieu of fighting, the Moravian pacifists were required to pay triple taxes to the colonial government.

In another article in the *Charlotte Democrat* dated 1891, the same grandson wrote of John Paul Barringer, *He was a Captain in the Army of the Revolution and became owner of the valuable farm taken from the Tory, Hagar, and known as the "House Mill."* So, Michael Christman was not the only one in the neighborhood to lose a valuable farm and a mill for suspicion of being a Tory. "Hagar" was John Hagler, the father of Michael's future daughter-in-law.

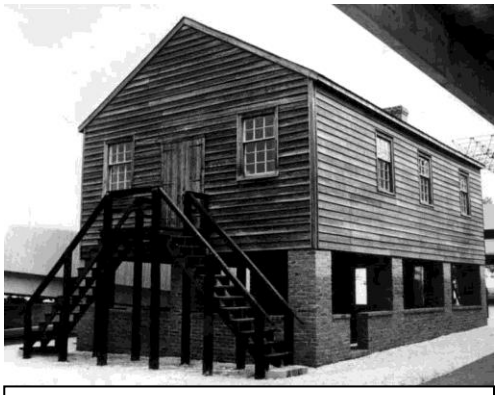
According to Lonnie Chrisman, General Clark ordered the return of the land, but evidently it hadn't happened by November 25, 1780, when a letter of complaint and a petition for the return of the land was submitted by Elizabeth Christman to General Butler. John Butler (1728-1786) was the commanding general of the Hillsborough District brigade of North Carolina militia until the end of the war, and a member of the North Carolina House of Commons. Butler also ruled in favor of the Christmans, but not much was done to help them at that point. The war was overshadowing every other issue and the general was busy trying to deal with the British General Cornwallis. Butler had been part of two serious losses for the Continentals already that year in South Carolina, and Cornwallis was advancing.

From the end of March to May, 1780, the British Generals Clinton and Cornwallis had surrounded the port of Charleston for six weeks before the Continental Army surrendered without a fight, a terrible setback for the revolution. Over 5,000 American soldiers were captured along with the city, 49 ships, 200 boats, and mountains of ammunition and supplies. The port of Charleston became the British base in the south for the rest of the war, which permitted General Cornwallis to march pretty much at will through the Carolinas that year.

After his victory at Charleston, General Cornwallis made his way north to Camden, South Carolina, 75 miles south of Mecklenburg. As the army slowly moved north, an advance group led by the infamous British Major Banastre Tarleton, encountered the Patriot militia at Waxhaw, the home of Andrew Jackson. At Waxhaw, Tarleton's cavalry routed the continental militia, who surrendered. While attempting to surrender under a white flag, 113 of the 400 continentals were killed by sabre and another 150 were so severely wounded that they had to be left behind. Only 53 prisoners were taken. This atrocity had an embittering effect on the Patriots, which led them to similar behaviors later when they had the upper hand.

Andrew Jackson's older brother Hugh had died at the Battle of Stono Ferry on June 20, 1779. Andrew and his brother Robert attended local militia drills but were too young to fight, but began to serve under Colonel William Davie as couriers. They were captured at a neighbor's house and held as prisoners, where they fared very badly. They both got smallpox and nearly died. Their widowed mother crossed the lines and negotiated the brothers' release, but Robert died of smallpox on the way home. Then she died of cholera tending sick continental prisoners aboard British ships at Charleston, leaving Andrew orphaned at 14, blaming the British for his loss. After living four more years at Waxhaw, Jackson made his way to Salisbury, North Carolina, 60 miles away. There he studied law, passed the bar, and got appointed prosecutor in western North Carolina, later to become Tennessee, in 1788. There he served as Senator from Tennessee, state Supreme Court judge, and as head of the Tennessee Militia, which led to his military career in the War of 1812.

On August 16, 1780 militia Captain John Starns, the murderer of Michael Christman, was killed in the Battle of Camden. The Mecklenburg Patriot militia had been put on the front lines ahead of the regulars commanded by General Horatio Gates. The militia possessed no bayonets and were decimated by the British. Although the Americans had a 2:1 advantage in numbers, just prior to the battle a large group had fallen sick with dysentery and could not fight, reducing colonial forces to about 3,000 vs. 2,200 redcoats. The Americans were routed, losing 900 dead and 1,000 captured. The British had 300 killed or wounded.



Replica of first Mecklenburg County Courthouse

From there the British moved on toward Charlotte. The Battle of Charlotte was fought on September 26, 1780 between the advancing General Cornwallis and a band of the North Carolina Patriot militia under Col. William R. Davie and volunteer captain Joseph Graham. About 150 mounted infantry and dragoons were joined by around 50 local volunteers to slow the British down in Charlotte. At that time Charlotte was a town of about 20 houses at the crossing of two streets. They made their stand from the open ground floor of the courthouse. A force of 300 British cavalry was repelled when the militia held its fire until they were 60 yards away and then scattered them. The small group repelled two more cavalry charges before they were pushed out by British light infantry. Cornwallis remained in Charlotte for 16 days. Serving as a rear guard for the American troops, Davies and the volunteers continued to slow the British army of about 2,000 men for 15 miles to Sugar Creek, protecting the American army. The stubborn resistance of the Mecklenburg volunteers earned them a nickname, which survives today, when General Cornwallis was heard to say, "Let's get

out of here--this place is a damned hornet's nest." The name of North Carolina's current NBA basketball team is the Charlotte Hornets. The British attempted to subjugate the countryside while the Patriot militia continued to harass them. Cornwallis dispatched troops to raise Loyalist forces to cover his left flank as he moved north. About 25,000 Loyalist colonists fought during the war for the British.

William Davie was an important local figure in the war. Born in England in 1756, he immigrated in 1763 when his father Archibald settled in the Waxhaw region. Davie was educated in Charlotte and then at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), graduating in 1776. There Davie was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention with his mentor William Churchill Houston, also from Carolina. He then studied law in Salisbury, North Carolina under Spruce Macay, who later became Andrew Jackson's legal trainer. In 1779 Davie volunteered, raising a cavalry troop in Salisbury, becoming a lieutenant, and soon a major. At the age of 23 he led a charge against the British at the Battle of Stono Ferry outside Charleston, seriously wounding his thigh and narrowly escaping capture. While recovering, he completed his legal training in Salisbury and was licensed as a lawyer in 1779. He returned to battle, just missing the disaster at Camden, but it was his cavalry that harassed the British, slowing their advancement to Charlotte. There he joined in the Battle of Charlotte on September 26, 1780, which earned the soldiers the epithet of hornets. After the war Davie served in the North Carolina House of Commons from 1786-1798 and was a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, brokering the "Great Compromise" in representation creating a bicameral legislature. He was a founder of the University of North Carolina and received its first honorary degree in 1811 and given the title Father of the University.

On October 7, 1780 the continental army got their first victory of the southern war when North Carolina Loyalist militia troops were annihilated by the local Continental militia at the Battle of Kings Mountain on the border of North and South Carolina about 30 miles west of Charlotte. Nine hundred Patriot militia men surprised about 1,100 Loyalist militia, who had been recruited by one of Cornwallis' officers, Major Patrick Ferguson, the only English soldier in the fight. The Continentals, who happened to include John Crockett, father of Davy Crockett, routed the Loyalists, and remembering Tarleton's behavior at Waxhaw "gave no quarter," killing many who were trying to surrender. Luckily for the Loyalist militia, the Continentals had to leave the scene in a hurry to avoid Cornwallis' army's return, but the defeat was so decisive, the British gave up their plans to further invade North Carolina for a time and retreated to Charleston for the winter.

The following March, Cornwallis returned to North Carolina to fight General Nathaniel Greene at Guilford Courthouse about 95 miles northeast of Charlotte. Cornwallis won the battle, but suffered enough casualties that he had to withdraw to the coast, which was protected by British ships. Although the war persisted at sea and some other locations for two more years, the fighting on land effectively ended with Cornwallis' defeat by Washington at Yorktown. September 3, 1783 was the end of the American Revolution when the Treaty of Paris was signed.

In January, 1784, a court ordered that Michael Christman's estate go to probate. Elizabeth Christman and a man named Leonard Garver were named the administrators, who together performed the audit of Michael's personal belongings on February 13, 1784. His possessions included three horses worth £25, four sheep, 2 bulls, 8 cows worth £30, a swarm of bees, a still worth £51, windmill worth £5-8, a grindstone, and many tools and household furniture. He owned two books. There were several flour

casks, two barrels, and several sacks, suggesting the milling profession. The total value of his property was about £150 or $28,000 in our dollars.

The inventory did not include land or buildings.

Chapter Two -- George Christman

When his father was murdered around 1779, George Christman was about 14 years old.[18] His brother Michael would have been about 16. I do not know whether the boys were present when it happened, how Michael Sr. was killed, or even the exact reason. In any case it must have been a terrible blow to the family, and an injustice. Their mother, Elizabeth, was about 38.

I assume that all of the Christman real estate was confiscated, not just the 340 acres where Dutch Buffalo Creek crosses the northern border of the county, but also the 125 acres where the creek enters Rocky River. If so, was the Christman family evicted or did they just lose the title to the land? When the accused Tory John Hagler lost his house and mill on Dutch Buffalo Creek to the militia, his property was sold to Paul Barringer and never was restored to the Hagler family after the war even though they continued to live in the community. I found no records to suggest that the Christman property was sold. Perhaps the murder and confiscation were not considered justified by the community.

Until the land was restored, Elizabeth probably relied heavily on her own relatives in Dutch Buffalo Creek for support. Her 46 year old brother Andrew Sides lived there. Her brother Henry Sides, whose "improvements" were recognized in Michael's 340 acre grant had probably moved to another county, but Elizabeth's 35 year old sister Margaret and Margaret's husband George Plott had moved from Killian Creek to Dutch Buffalo Creek with their 10 children, and her younger brother Michael Sides was also there with a wife and at least three children. Another brother, Christian Sides, was probably there as well, appearing in records of property near the junction of Dutch Buffalo Creek and Rock River in 1764 and 1770 and in the 1790 census.

During the years of the war it appears that there was no civil government in Mecklenburg County except the council of local militias. Since it was a militia captain who took their land, the Christmans' only appeal was to a higher military power, which is why the family appealed to General Clark from Virginia and to General Butler, who had authority over North Carolina troops. And although the generals both ruled in the family's favor, it appears to have taken several years to straighten things out, probably not until the end of the American Revolutionary War on September 3, 1783. Michael's personal possessions went to probate in 1784, but there was no mention of his land in that document. But by 1787 the land was definitely back in the family's hands. Since Michael Sr. had died without leaving a will, the land was awarded by law to the eldest son, Michael Jr., but by then Michael was pursuing other opportunities in South Carolina.

Michael Jr. is said to have married Elizabeth Weidner of Waxhaw in 1783 where her family lived. By 1786, when the couple's first son was born, they were living in Orangeburg, South Carolina, which is 150 miles away from Waxhaw, between Camden and Charleston. They lived there for at least another decade. Michael Jr.'s uncle, Henry Sides, is known to have been living there in 1788, so perhaps they went together. Orangeburg was another town which had been populated by German speaking people, as early as 1765. It was located on the Edisto River, which connected to the port of Charleston.

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[18] Census data on George Christman's age vary widely and only give a range. Taken together, they allow a birth year between 1766 and 1770, so he could have been as young nine years old. Most genealogists give 1765, so I'll go with that.

When Michael Jr. left Dutch Buffalo Creek, George was about 19 years old and was probably providing the sole support for his mother. Four years later in January of 1787 George purchased his father's former property from his brother Michael. I assume, but do not know for certain, that it included the additional 125 acres through which Dutch Buffalo Creek ran. In December of that year George sold 223 acres on the northern border of the county including "the chief habitation and improvements" to Frederich Limbach for £175 in North Carolina money. The deed confirms that Michael Christman Sr. had died intestate (without a will), that Michael Christman Jr. had inherited it by law as eldest son, and then sold it to George. Since the original acreage totaled 340, I assume George retained the land which he had not sold to Limbach. So at that point, George possessed two pieces of land upon which a mill could have operated.

In 1788 George Christman married Elizabeth Hagler. He was 23 and she was 17, the youngest daughter of the old Tory, John Hagler, from whom the property with house and mill had been confiscated. Her father had hurriedly written a will in 1771 in anticipation of trouble, and then died suspiciously a year later when Elizabeth was just an infant, after he had taken a stand in support of Governor Tryon against the Regulators. Her widowed mother, Barbara Clontz, married Phillip Earnhart five years later, but died in 1777, leaving six year old Elizabeth and four older siblings ages 11-18 to be raised by an elderly step-father. Her oldest brother and sister were probably on their own by then. Interestingly, Elizabeth's uncle, John Michael Clontz, had been living since before 1767 on property adjoining the east border of Christmans' 125 acre piece that straddled upper Dutch Buffalo Creek. Perhaps that is how she and George initially met.

Elizabeth had an older half-brother named John "The Cripple" Hagler, who had married Catherine Seits, George Christman's aunt, and lived close to them. Her brother Jacob Hagler also lived nearby with his young family. Both men were prominent in Dutch Buffalo Creek and owned large plantations. Her 38 year old sister Anna Barbara also lived in Dutch Buffalo Creek with her husband Charles Barnhardt and nine children.

Elizabeth's father John (Johannes) Hagler was a very early settler who had come from the Basel area of Switzerland. His arrival has not been documented with certainty, but I have been convinced by one family historian[19] that John probably arrived before 1749 at Charleston, South Carolina, which was the second largest port in the colonies at that time. Unfortunately all colonial records there were destroyed by General Sherman during the Civil War, so there is no proof that John arrived there. He migrated to the Collins River (now Enoree River) in South Carolina around 1749. It was probably around then that John's first wife (no one knows her name) died and he married Barbara Clontz, Elizabeth's mother. From there he went north in 1752 to the Henry River in North Carolina among the hostile Cherokee Indians, where he received a grant of 150 acres from Lord Granville to settle where the town of Hickory is today. There, sometime before 1756, he helped Captain Hugh Waddell erect Ft. Dobbs, a garrison for troops fighting the Cherokees during the French and Indian War. It was a blockhouse with log walls and a shallow surrounding ditch built to protect British settlers of Rowan County and house soldiers, traders, and colonial officials. That association with Waddell is what later led John Hagler to ally with the Tories against the Regulators in Mecklenburg County. After the French and Indian War ended, the fort was closed, and around 1763 the Haglers moved 45 miles from there to Dutch Buffalo Creek. In 1765 John obtained a grant of 255 acres right at the junction of Dutch Buffalo Creek with Clear Creek, a prime

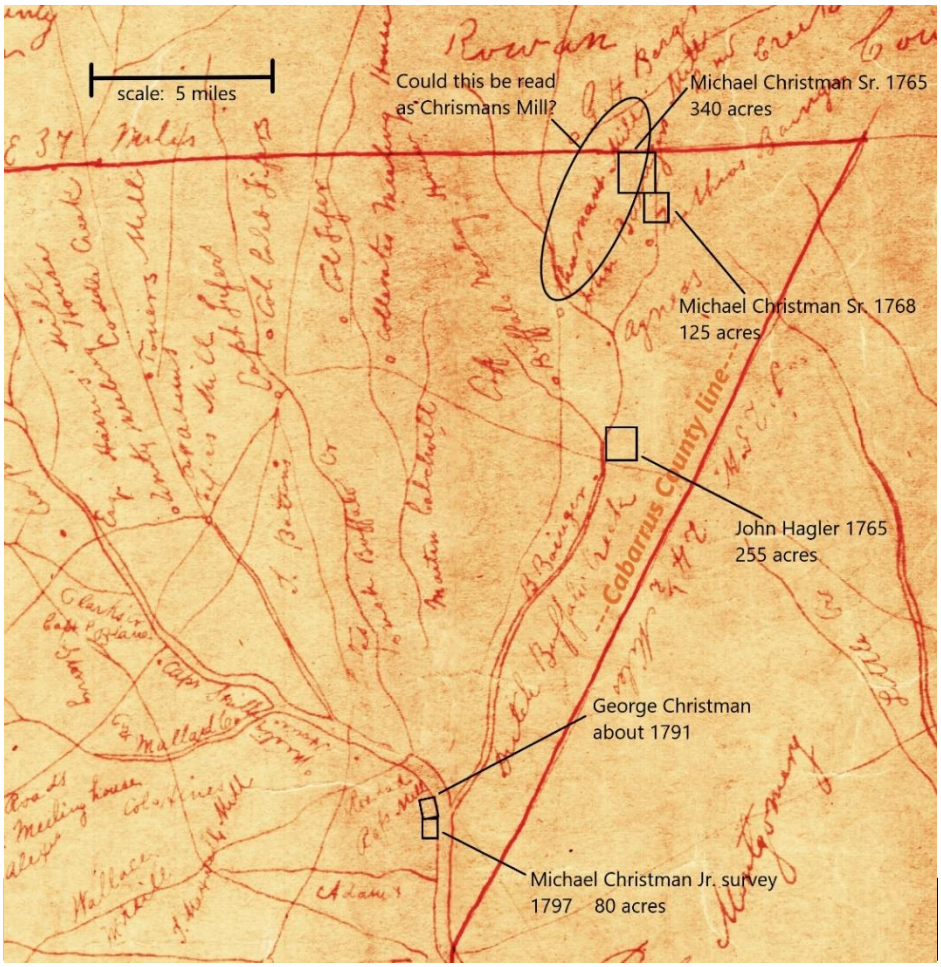
[19] John Blair Hagler, http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/cabarrus/bios/hagler02.txt

location, where he built his house and mill, which were confiscated in 1771, about nine years before Michael Christman's land and life were taken.

George Christman and Elizabeth had their first child, Henry Christman, on January 3, 1789 at Dutch Buffalo Creek.

General Graham

I ran across an interesting hand-drawn map in the North Carolina State Archives dated 1789. It is evidently drawn on parchment in pencil, showing the entire Mecklenburg County. The map was scanned in high resolution, which has allowed me to magnify it with good clarity and show the features of Dutch Buffalo Creek. The author was a Revolutionary War hero named General Joseph Graham, who with Davie had repelled the British at the Charlotte courthouse. After the war Graham represented Mecklenburg County to vote approval of the U.S. Constitution, and in 1789 he was serving in the North Carolina Senate. Prior to that time he had served as Mecklenburg county sheriff, which may help to explain his impressive understanding of detail. I won't show you the whole map here, but it is worth a look if you're interested.[20] Here's the part of the map that shows the Dutch Buffalo Creek area, which in 1792 would become Cabarrus County.



[20] https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ncmaps/id/155.

The very first national census of the United States was performed a year later in 1790. George appears in it as head of a household, which consisted of one male over 16, one under 16 and one female. There were 1,741 families in Mecklenburg County comprising 11,395 people of whom 1,603 were slaves. Near George's name were Barringer, Dry, and Smith, the surnames of the three original settlers of Dutch Buffalo Creek and also Daniel, Peter, and Jacob Boger and James and Daniel Little, men mentioned in property records on the family's borders. This suggests that George and Elizabeth were living in or near his father's original house near the northern border of the county.

I was not able to find George's mother Elizabeth Seits Christman in the 1790 census in Mecklenburg nor in 1800 with George in Lancaster. She would have been 49 in 1790 and was not listed as a widow and was not counted in George's household. I could not find any Christmans in Mecklenburg County that could have been younger siblings of George and Michael Jr. either. It is possible that Elizabeth had re-married or was counted in the household of one of her siblings or moved back to Killian Creek, where she was raised, although her parents were long dead by then. But I think that it is most likely that she had died before that.

In that census Michael Christman Jr. appeared in Orangeburg, South Carolina. He reported two boys under 16 and a daughter, which suggests that they had a second son we don't have in our pedigree charts, who was born before 1790. Michael Jr. had four children in Orangeburg, but by the next census in 1800, he had returned to Lancaster District (Waxhaw) living nearly next door to his wife's parents, Samuel and Nancy Jane Weidner.

On February 18, 1791, George and his wife Elizabeth signed a record of sale to Frederick Limbaugh of 223 acres of Michael Sr.'s former land, which they had bought from Michael Jr. Limbaugh was another Palatine immigrant from nearby Lincoln County, who doesn't appear to have ever lived in Cabarrus County. It seems likely that George's family and his mother Elizabeth continued to live on the approximately 142 acres that remained from his father's two land grants, although there may have been additional land that I was not able to trace.

I have no primary sources to illuminate George's actions during the next several years. I believe that they were spent in Dutch Buffalo Creek, but by the 1800 census George was living in Waxhaw, South Carolina, where Michael Jr. and his family were living. Before 1800 Elizabeth Hagler bore five more children: John, Michael, George, Barbara, and Jacob. Without providing documentation, some family trees denote the birthplace of some of these children as Pendleton, Anderson County, South Carolina.[21] This makes no sense to me since Pendleton is 182 miles from Cabarrus County. Those children who lived until the 1860 census all gave North Carolina[22] as their place of birth.

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[21] Anderson County did not exist until 1826. Pendleton District was formed after the war from lands taken from the Cherokees for siding with the British. During the next 10 years it was flooded with Scot-Irish immigrants. I looked at the first half of the 3,750 family names in the 1790 census and did not see a single one that looked German.

[22] Actually, George Jr. and Barbara did each give South Carolina in one later census as their place of birth, but North Carolina in all the others. To the owners of pedigrees that give the birthplace of George's children as Pendleton, Anderson County, I admit that is possible that George moved his family to South Carolina as early as 1791 just after selling his property, but that makes no sense to me, and since I have found supporting data, I think it more likely that he stayed in Cabarrus County until about 1800. The next child, Catherine, who was born in 1799

In 1792, Dutch Buffalo Creek was assigned to Cabarrus County, which had been carved out from northeast Mecklenburg County. State Representative Paul Barringer of Dutch Buffalo Creek had introduced the boundary change bill in the state legislature. The new county also contained Rocky River. In 1796 a North Carolina couple named Bartholomew and Martha Ann Wood became the first settlers in the frontier town of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. That region soon would attract a steady flow of settlers from the east including George and his family.

Bost Mill on Rocky River, mid-1800s

In 1797 a land grant survey was ordered in behalf of Michael Christman, Jr. on 80 acres of land on the south side of Rocky River, which suggests that he was back in the Dutch Buffalo Creek area by then. Interestingly, according to the survey order, his claim bordered on land owned by his brother George, which is the only evidence I have that George owned additional land besides their father's acreage. On the south side of Rocky River, it would have been at least 12 miles from their father's farm. This location was an excellent potential mill site. In fact, there is a mill located there on the Graham map. A popular modern tourist stop in Cabarrus County is the historic Bost Mill on the same stretch of Rocky River near its junction with Dutch Buffalo Creek, which dates back to colonial times.[23] Although George and his family may have lived on that property by Rocky River, and possibly were running a grist mill there, I don't think that Michael Jr. actually ever acquired the land he was claiming in 1797, since for some reason the survey was not completed and registered until March 10, 1807, long after Michael had settled his family in the Waxhaw area.

In 1799, a farm boy in Cabarrus County found a 17 pound gold nugget, which the family didn't identify as valuable. They used it for a doorstop for several years before an enterprising neighbor bought it for $3.50. Soon a gold rush was on, but by then George had moved on to Kentucky, having disposed of his North Carolina properties.

I don't understand why George and his family made a stop in Waxhaw before moving to Kentucky. Perhaps that interim move was influenced by Michael Jr. or by the several of Elizabeth's Hagler relatives living there. The census taker found the George Christman family in Lancaster district (Waxhaw), South Carolina. George reported three boys under 10—John, Michael, and George Jr., and Henry was 11. George himself was 35. His oldest daughter, Barbara, was three, and Caty was a newborn. His wife Elizabeth was 29. Lancaster District was a group of farms and plantations 40 miles south of Charlotte, just over the South Carolina border, which on the map drops sharply to the south at that point from Waxhaw. Lancaster is ten miles east of the site of the Revolutionary War Battle of Waxhaw, also known as Buford's Massacre.

At the time it was a prime location to live. In the district was a well-known school called Waxhaw Academy, which had been established in 1759 at the Presbyterian Church. That school is where Andrew Jackson and William Davie had been educated by Rev. William Richardson. The town of Lancaster was

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or 1800 also gave her birthplace as North Carolina, although she was counted in the 1800 census in Waxhaw, South Carolina.

[23] http://www.bostgristmill.com/index.html.

not officially founded until 1802, two years after George's family arrived. At the time of the census it was simply Lancaster District, a collection of small townships. The district had 6,012 people of which 1,076 were slaves. Lancaster is part of the metro area of Charlotte now.

I have no information on the time between the 1800 U.S. census in Waxhaw and 1803 when George and Elizabeth Christman had a child born in Kentucky. I think it is possible that George was already on his way to Kentucky in 1800, and just happened to fill out the census in Waxhaw while visiting the Haglers or Michael Jr. and his family. But it seems more likely that George and Elizabeth stayed in Waxhaw a couple of years before hitting the wagon trail to Kentucky. Perhaps George and his brother Michael were working together on a project that drew them both there, such as building a mill, possibly involving Elizabeth's brothers Paul and Abraham and her nephew Jacob Hagler, who were all in their 30's living close to Michael and his in-laws the Wideners, and all with experience in milling.

After George left, Michael Christman Jr. remained in Waxhaw until at least 1808, when his last child Anna was born, but by 1820 Michael had petitioned for land in Fayette, Alabama, where he lived until he died sometime after 1830.

Another Carolina family, the Bobbitts, migrated to Kentucky in 1803 and possibly traveled together with George Christman's family. I can find no plausible connection between the families before that time, but they were later to be inextricably linked by three intermarriages in Kentucky.

Isham Bobbitt was from Granville County, North Carolina, about 150 miles northeast of Dutch Buffalo Creek, and he was about a decade older than George. Isham was the son of a wealthy tobacco planter and the grandson of an immigrant from Surrey, England to Virginia in 1674. Isham volunteered at the age of 26 for the War of Independence, leaving his wife and four little boys while he served in the unsuccessful effort to break the siege at Charleston in 1780, arriving too late to help. Bobbitt was discharged at Fayetteville, North Carolina as a sergeant in June, fortuitously also missing the losing battles in South and North Carolina that followed.

After a brief break with his family, Isham Bobbitt worked a three-month tour with Colonel Long, Quartermaster General, as a saddler, making and repairing wagon gear for army wagons. Then he joined General Greene near Hillsborough and marched to Guilford Courthouse to engage Cornwallis. Isham volunteered as a forage master under Captain William Twitty and in the Light Horse Company, having brought his own horse. They pursued Cornwallis to Little York in Virginia, where the British General surrendered his 8,000 men on October 19, 1781. After the surrender, Isham returned to North Carolina, marched to Wilmington, and then to Harrisburg for discharge. But after the war had ended, his family, like the Christmans, was on the move west. By 1790, Isham Bobbitt was in Spartanburg, in the extreme north west of South Carolina, appearing in the first U.S. census with 12 household members, and was still living there in 1800. Spartanburg is about 100 miles west of Waxhaw, where the Christmans were living, so if they did travel together, the Christmans must have first traveled west to join with the Bobbitts.

In 1803, Isham and Amy Bobbitt had eleven children ranging in age from seven to 28 years old. William, the oldest, was single, but Drury Allen and Winnie were both married and traveled with small children. Stephen, who would later marry Barbara Christman, was 23 and single. John Bobbitt, who would become a Baptist minister in Kentucky, had married Hester Boney a year previously and they were still

childless. The younger children, Amy, Fannie, Betsey, Sally, Isham Drury, and Nancy ranged from 18 to seven years old.

George and Elizabeth Christman traveled with their seven children ranging in age from three to fourteen. In order of birth, they were Henry, John, Michael, George, Barbara, Jacob, and Caty. Elizabeth may have been pregnant with David, who was born later that year in Kentucky.

The route they took was not recorded, but the families probably traveled through the abandoned lands of the Cherokee Nation, crossing the Great Smoky Mountains on the south end of the Appalachians. That route had opened up to travelers during and after the Revolutionary War, when the Cherokees migrated south and west. The way led through Knoxville, Tennessee, the state's first capitol, which was settled in 1786 on the Tennessee River. By 1794 it was said to have seven taverns and no church. In 1802 Knoxville had 100 houses. Ten "well-stocked stores," tanners, and blacksmiths were the main businesses. By 1807, 200 migrants were passing through per day, mostly moving from North Carolina to Kentucky.

From there, the Christmans and Bobbitts tackled the 190 miles of rough wagon road to Nashville on the Cumberland River, a tributary of the great Ohio. In 1800 Nashville had 345 residents including 136 slaves and 14 free Negros. It was the adopted home of Andrew Jackson, who had been living there since 1788. When the Christmans passed through, Jackson was serving as a state Supreme Court justice and was Major General of the Tennessee militia. Nashville was not incorporated as a city until 1806, but it was destined to become the permanent capitol of Tennessee a few decades later. It was only 70 miles from their destination of Hopkinsville, Christian County, Kentucky.

Kentucky had been explored by the British in 1750 and 1751 before the French ceded it to them in the Treaty of Paris in 1763, but it was not settled until after 1774 when Daniel Boone entered via the Cumberland Gap. At the beginning of the Revolutionary War there were only about 200 white settlers in Kentucky, mostly in the north part of the state, having come from Virginia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Many more came during the war, and several important battles took place in Lexington, which had been so named in honor of the birthplace of the revolution in Massachusetts. Kentucky was divided off from Virginia and admitted to the union in 1792. But it was not until 1797 that Christian County was organized. It began as a giant county, covering most of western Kentucky, which later spawned many normal-sized counties as the population built up.

The first official government meeting in Christian County was held on March 21, 1797 in the courthouse in Hopkinsville.[24] The third resolution of that meeting was to issue a writ to James Shaw to view and condemn (property to use as) a mill site on Big Eddy Creek. The fourth resolution, to Robert Cravens for the same purpose on the Barren Fork of Little River. The second court, held July 18th the same year, ordered that the two mill sites be recorded, and that other mill sites be investigated. Until that time, cobs of dry corn had to be shredded on hand graters.[25] The next year William Dryden was commissioned to establish a mill site at Raines Creek on the Sinking Fork of Little River, the very area where the Christmans would soon settle.

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[24] It was actually named Elizabeth at the time after the daughter of the first settler. It would be renamed Hopkinsville in 1804, after the Christmans had established themselves there.

[25] William Henry Parrin, *Counties of Todd and Christian, Kentucky: Historical and Biographical,* 1884.

To give you an idea of the wilderness surrounding the Christian County settlement at the time, a 1799 financial statement for the county recorded bounties paid to 20 people for 37 wolf scalps at six shillings each.

Hoping to get a clue on the location and occupation of George's family, I did a deep dive into the history of milling in Christian County, Kentucky. It is hard for me to imagine the Christmans not participating in that trade. Even if I overreached a bit in searching for evidence of milling in North Carolina, I can find no plausible explanation for the multiple mills built by George and his sons in Illinois and beyond without firmly linking them to the trade in Kentucky.

The mill site claimed by James Shaw on Big Eddy was 30 miles west of Hopkinsville in what was to become Trigg County in 1820. I know nothing of the history of that mill, or whether it was indeed even built. Robert Cravens' site was to become the first mill in Hopkinsville in 1800 on the "Barren" Fork of Little River, later known as the East Fork, which passed right through the eastern edge of Hopkinsville. The mill was built by David Youngs, who brought his millstones in a wagon all the way from Bullskin, Pennsylvania. Evidently he ran the mill with two slaves and two adult sons named Cable and John, who showed up with their young families on consecutive lines in the 1810 census, suggesting adjoining houses. In 1830 it was known as Gipson's Mill as it is shown on the historic 1878 historic map of Hopkinsville, located near Russellville Road. David Youngs is said to have built two separate mills in that period. The second may have been the one on Edwards Mill Road, also on Little River a little south of town.

In 1805, Nathan Cate established another mill on Little River on present East 9th Street and Woodmill Road in Hopkinsville.[26]

There are two more mills mentioned by name in the county histories. One is Cocke's Mill, which was built in 1820 on the south end of modern Cox Mill Road on Little River just east of the town of Pee Dee. Colonel John Willis Cocke arrived in Hopkinsville in 1811 and died in 1822, but his mill survived to appear on the 1878 map. Another mill was build that year by John Clark closer to Hopkinsville on Huffman Mill Road.

In investigating the early mill building activity of Christian County I had hoped to discover exactly where the Christmans might have settled. Unfortunately their name was not associated with any of the known early mills. But I noticed that no account mentioned more than one or two mills—and none was aware of all of them. This leads me to believe that there may have been mills that escaped the attention of chroniclers.

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[26] Some histories incorrectly name Barker's Mill the first in the county. It is located on the Red River about 15 miles southeast of Hopkinsville near the village of St. Elmo. It was built in 1812 by Bailey Martin, who was born in Rockingham, North Carolina. He died the very next year, leaving it to his son, William, Evidently William was not very interested in running the mill, and leased it to a wealthy Tennessean named Thomas S. Watson in 1815, who owned a large plantation and had been a business partner to Andrew Jackson and had invested in multiple milling projects. William Miller sold the mill and 250 acres on September 18, 1826 for $1,000. Around 1840 it came into the hands of the Barker family, who ran it until World War II. John Barker's oldest daughter, Mrs. Loulie Barker Hendrick (1869-1952) remembered seeing, as a little girl in the 1870's, many wagonloads of grain drawn by teams of oxen, waiting their turn in the circular road in front of the mill. Ox-shoes, made in 2 pieces for split hooves, were found in the mill area several years ago. http://www.westernkyhistory.org/christian/town/barkers.html.

One historian of the county wrote: *At the beginning of the new century a stampede* (of settlers) *had set in, and what became known as South Christian was soon settled by immigrants from Virginia, a different race from the hardy woodsmen from North Carolina who had settled in the north.*[27] That gave me the idea that the Christmans and Bobbitts, certainly "hardy woodsmen," probably settled in the northern part of the county. That idea is given strong support in the biography of Mary Polly Williams, whom we will discuss soon. Her Carolina parents were said to have settled near the Christman family on Sinking Creek, which runs a meandering course from north to south passing about six miles west of Hopkinsville's west border before running into Little River.

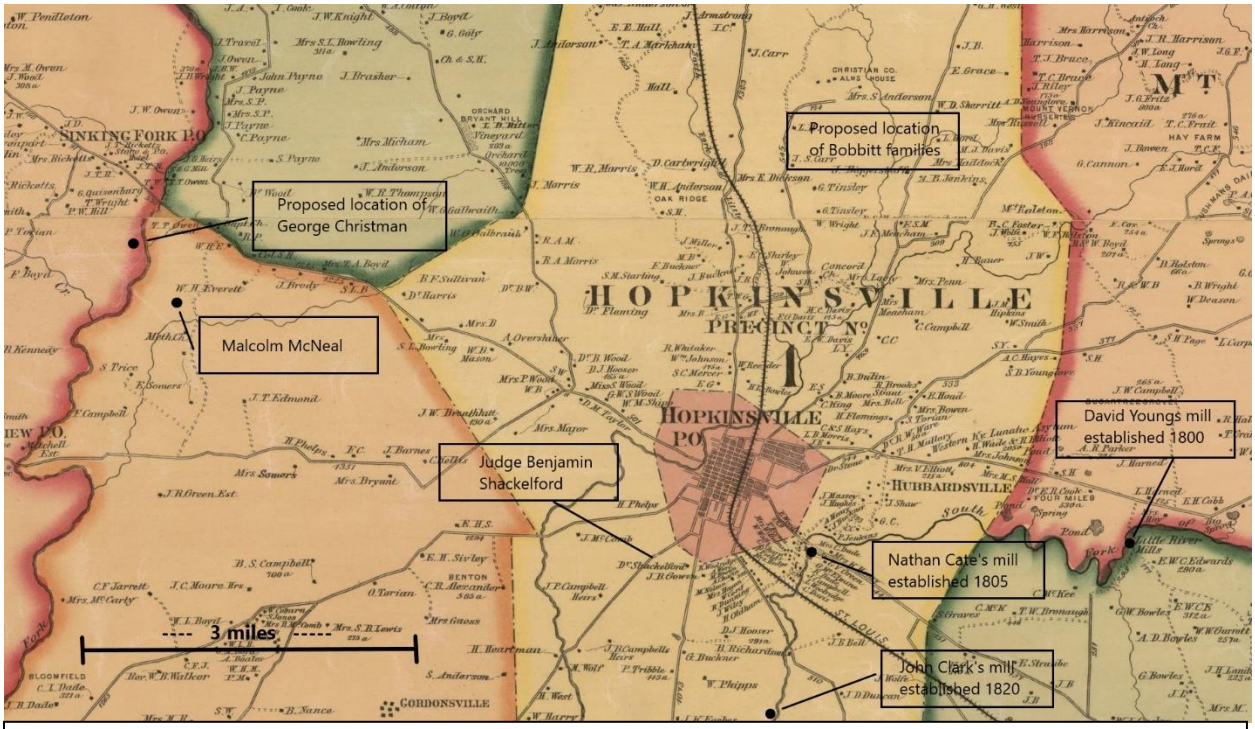
In all my research on Christian County mills, I have been unable to find any historical account that names the builder and operator of the site that was commissioned to William Dryden on Sinking Fork of Little River at Raines Creek in 1798, but I now think it possible, even likely, that it was George Christman.

I followed the crazily winding entirety of Sinking Fork on Google Maps without finding an indication of a mill or a branch called Raines Creek, but I did find an early settler in the 1810 census of Christian County named James Rains, after whom that tributary could have been named, and his name was listed on a page between the Christmans and Benjamin Shackleford (whom I will soon mention) suggesting he lived near to both of them. In addition to the mention of Dryden in the court records of mill exploration, there was a tax record of him in 1800, but he did not appear in any Christian County records after that, having evidently moved west to Missouri. Could William Dryden have sold his mill claim to the Christmans?

No town called Sinking Fork appears on modern maps of Christian County, only the waterway itself and a Sinking Fork Elementary School on the Princeton Road a few miles northwest of Hopkinsville. I had imagined a string of cabins and farms along the whole course of the river through the western part of the county. But then I found an amazing 1878 map of Hopkinsville at the Library of Congress. True, the map is not nearly as ancient as our story, but is old enough to show Sinking Fork as a community. The town even had a post office. And that is where the Christmans settled.

The Sinking Fork community was settled in about 1798. The unusual name of the river came from its tendency to disappear below ground for stretches into limestone caves and then return to the surface. It had a significant flow, though far from navigable, and emptied into Little River in the south part of the county. At that time the Sinking Fork settlement was important enough to be considered a candidate for the "seat of justice," the county courthouse, which was instead awarded to the neighboring settlement of Elizabeth, renamed Hopkinsville in 1804, which became the county seat. This decision eventually caused the total disappearance of Sinking Fork, the town. Robert Cravens was living in Sinking Fork in 1798 when he was commissioned to establish the mill on Little River in Elizabeth, which ironically may also have contributed to the diminution of his own town.

[27] Charles Mayfield Meacham, *A History of Christian County Kentucky from Oxcart to Airplane*, Nashville, Tennesee 1930, page 36.



Hopkinsville and Sinking Fork, 1878

American frontier towns often arose around mill sites, as witnessed by the many modern streets with the word "mill" in them. Until the industrial revolution, America was in an age of wood and water, so a saw mill was essential, often the first commercial building in a community. And most pioneers were farmers, which necessitated a grist mill. It is estimated that in colonial times there was a mill for every 245 people, so there were often several mills in a community, as was the case in both Dutch Buffalo Creek and Christian County. Until the Civil War the force of gravity upon water was the main source of all industrial power. People sometimes traveled up to 50 miles to get their grains milled. And sawmills allowed people to move from their log cabins into plank-built houses.[28] Saw mills of the time typically used an up-and-down blade which was very thick, from 3/8 to 1/2". They could produce 1,000 boards per day, compared to about 12 when using a two-man saw. The first circular saws were developed in 1814, but they were small—metallurgy had not yet caught up. The band saw wasn't invented until 1869.

Grist milling was seasonal, and most millers were also farmers during the rest of the year. Most were also blacksmiths or carpenters, since those skills were necessary for building and maintaining the mills. Often it was possible for out-of-town mill customers to get their wagons repaired or their horses shod while they waited for their flour. Mills through the early 1800s were not much different from those used in Europe since the 1300s, and many millers were European immigrants like the Christmans.

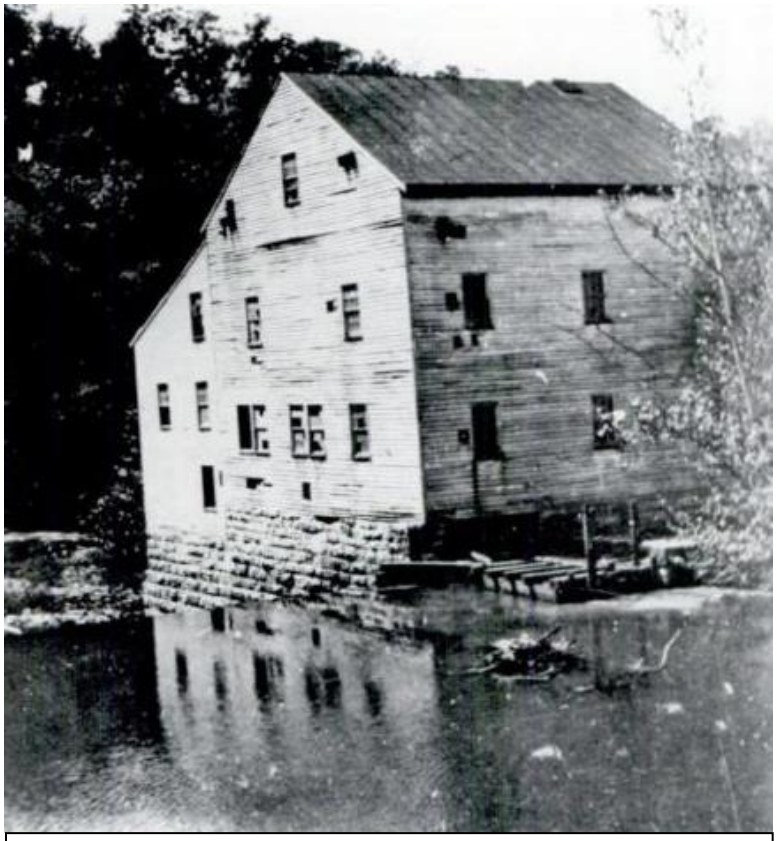
Mills of that day came in four basic types. The tub wheel was horizontal and did not require gears to attach to the stones. It relied on a constant, deeper stream, and did not require a fall in elevation. The other types all had a vertical wheel and a gear structure. The undershot wheel could function on less than a six-foot drop of water and could produce 3-4 horsepower, using only about 15-30% of the

[28] https://www.engr.psu.edu/mtah/articles/colonial_wood_water.htm#i.

potential water energy. The overshot wheel required at least a 10-foot water fall and harnessed up to 70% of the potential energy, producing up to 5 horsepower. The breast wheel was half submerged in water guided by a chute on both sides. This type was more commonly used to power factories, and was the most common mill type of the early 1800s.

Millers from Germany were apt to use the undershot type. Miller's fees, called "tolls," were paid in shares of about 1/8 to 1/4 of the produced flour, and were often a cause of mistrust, since it was difficult for the customer to measure the output, as they were not usually permitted to enter the mill house. Such buildings were generally two stories plus a loft to store grain, which was hauled up a ladder by boys, or by a hoist, which could be powered by a gearing system from the mill wheel, and dumped out on the floor to dry before grinding.

The two millstones, usually about 48 inches in diameter, ground against each other on the first floor as grain was fed through the "eye" of the top stone, and the flour was collected in the basement, sifted by hand as it dropped down a chute from the stones.



Barker's Mill in Christian County, build by Bailey Martin in 1812 on the west fork of Red River.

Building a mill could be done in about a month of hard labor, but much expertise was required. A good site was required, which could provide a mill pond, a sufficient drop, and an abundance of logs for building. Logs would be cut to beams, boards, and shingles. A white oak was required for the waterwheel shaft. A dam, sluice and often a fish diversion were built. It was a dangerous job to move the stones into position. Sometimes cranes were constructed for the task, which could require many men. The lower stone, called the "bed stone" was stationary. A spindle came up through its center which turned the upper stone, the "runner" stone. The two stones were arranged to never quite touch each other. The size of the grain determined the adjustment of the tiny space between them. The whole mechanism depended upon a wooden gear system and leather or canvas pulleys to transfer the rotation of the millwheel to the stones.

George was lucky enough to have several boys old enough to help with the building and operation of the mill by then. And more were coming. David was probably born in 1803, right after their arrival.

The Bobbitts and the Christmans located in different areas of the county. Drury Allen Bobbitt, age 27, with a wife named Hester and two children, filed for a land grant of 100 acres on Barren Fork. The same

day, August 10, 1803, his 21 year old brother John Bobbitt filed for 200 acres on Barren Fork Tradewater. The headwaters of the important Tradewater River, which flows north into the Ohio River, are in the hills six miles north of Hopkinsville. John Bobbitt, who was a Baptist minister, and his wife Hester had their first child, a four month old baby named Mary Elizabeth.

Peter Christman was born April 4, 1805. A survey for 260 acres was recorded for his father, George, on Sinking Fork the following year. On Christmas Day, 1807, Elizabeth Hagler Christman gave birth to her tenth child, who was Charles, my third great grandfather.

Drury Allen Bobbitt, the second of the Bobbitt children, died in 1808, leaving his wife Nancy and two teenage kids, a boy and a girl. Nancy and the children appeared in the 1810 census in Christian County, but I was unable to trace them further.

In that census, the population of Christian County was 9,435 of which 1,766 were slaves. It is difficult to tell from the census which of the families were in the town of Hopkinsville and which were in the county. The first page has the word Hopkinsville written in the margin, so I infer that the first few pages (or a total of 65 families) represented people living in the town, which was still very small. William, John and their father, Isham Bobbitt were listed close together on page three, so I think they were probably living in the town of Hopkinsville at the time despite John's land claim on the Tradewater. The Christman family was listed on page seven, which implies that there were no more than six pages of residents in Hopkinsville. By this time Charles and Elizabeth had children ranging in age from one to 21. Nancy Bobbitt, Drury's widow, and unmarried 30 year old Stephen Bobbitt were on much later pages of the census, which was by then extending to the northern reaches of the county.

Obviously, though living a few miles apart, the Christmans and Bobbitts were not isolated from each other. On October 19, 1811, George's 18 year old son Michael Christman married 19 year old Sally Bobbitt and just ten weeks later his older brother John married 15 year old Nancy Bobbitt. The following April 13, 1812 William Christman, the youngest child of George and Elizabeth, was born.

1812 was a big year for the Christmans in many ways.

In November of 1811, right between the two family weddings, news had come of the Battle of Tippecanoe in the nearby Indiana Territory. The Shawnees made a surprise attack on 1,000 militia men led by the William Henry Harrison, governor of the state. Harrison declared victory, but the battle was probably more of a stand-off. The Americans blamed the British, who had been supplying money and firearms to the Native Americans of the western frontier, and the attack served as a catalyst for the declaration of the War of 1812 in June. Andrew Jackson was a main agitator for the war. Much of the support for the Indiana Territory against the Indians and the British in that war was to be drawn directly from Kentucky.

Then to make matters much worse, a month after Tippecanoe, the Midwest was shocked by the worst earthquake, actually the worst *five* earthquakes, in the entire recorded history of the United States east of the Rockies. It was called the New Madrid earthquake with an epicenter just 135 miles west of Hopkinsville. The magnitude of the first shock, which happened on December 12, 1811 at midnight, was 7.2-8.2. I have no specific earthquake information on Hopkinsville, but the quake totally destroyed the town of New Madrid and caused the Mississippi River to briefly flow retrograde. The initial quake was followed by an aftershock of 7.4 magnitude later that day, and a total of four or five more in January and

February of similar magnitude. The shaking was severe over an area of 50,000 square miles, which is a radius of 224 miles, easily encompassing Hopkinsville, and moderate over a million-mile area. In comparison, the moderate effects of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake were felt over 6,200 square miles. Since the Midwest was sparsely populated, property damage was minimal by current standards, but importantly, the quake had a huge impact on the Native Americans, who saw it as a divine mandate to continue the war against the European settlers.

The Christmans and Bobbitts left no record of their experience of this disaster, but here's an eyewitness report that may give an idea of it.

> *On the night of 16th November [sic], 1811, an earthquake occurred, that produced great consternation amongst the people. The center of the violence was in New Madrid, Missouri, but the whole valley of the Mississippi was violently agitated. Our family all were sleeping in a log cabin, and my father leaped out of bed crying aloud "the Indians are on the house" ... We laughed at the mistake of my father, but soon found out it was worse than the Indians. Not one in the family knew at the time that it was an earthquake. The next morning another shock made us acquainted with it, so we decided it was an earthquake. The cattle came running home bellowing with fear, and all animals were terribly alarmed on the occasion. Our house cracked and quivered, so we were fearful it would fall to the ground. In the American Bottom many chimneys were thrown down, and the church bell in Cahokia sounded by the agitation of the building.*[29]

In June, the War of 1812 broke out over the issue of the British naval blockade of the American coast, which prevented trade with France during the Napoleonic War. To man the blockade, the Royal Navy was capturing American merchant sailors and forcing them to serve in warships. The British were also supplying arms to the Indians, which were being turned against the American settlers who were pressing into the "northwest territory" of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Threatened by hostilities on its border with Indiana, Kentuckians responded willingly to the call for soldiers, forming volunteer companies before and in excess of state quotas. After the initial contingent of Kentucky militia was defeated and then massacred by Indians after capture by the British, the state rose up to take the lead in recruitment. General William Henry Harrison asked the legislature for 2,000 troops, but 4,000 Kentucky riflemen were sent to protect Indiana. The riflemen were feared and hated by the British. They could kill from a distance, and sometimes took scalps. They comprised a quarter of the American army. In all, 24,000 Kentuckians served in the war, five sixths of all men in the state of military age. Kentucky had 60% of all the casualties in the war, about 1,200, more than all other states combined. In Tennessee, Andrew Jackson raised 2,500 militia volunteers for the war, but did not get called into action at that time.

One of the residents of Christian County to sign up for duty in the War of 1812 was 20 year old Isham Drury Bobbitt, a private in First Regiment, Caldwell's mounted Kentucky Volunteers. He was discharged October 30th the same year. He got a pension and land bounty, and served only in Kentucky.

In January of 1813, Andrew Jackson led 2,017 volunteers to defend New Orleans against the British and Native Americans under General Wilkinson. Then he was sent to attack the Muscogee Indians with

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[29] John Reynolds (1788–1865), the fourth governor of Illinois, among other political posts, mentions the earthquake in his biography *My Own Times: Embracing Also the History of My Life* (1855).

2,500 men and had a decisive victory. In June, 1814 Jackson was made a Brigadier General and ten days later a Major General. Without orders from Washington, he defeated the British and Spanish at the Battle of Pensacola in November, and then rushed to New Orleans, toward which he heard that the British Navy was sailing.

That April, Stephen Bobbitt enlisted as a private in Captain Butler's Company, U.S. infantry and was discharged a year later in April 27, 1814. He received a land bounty, which he later redeemed in Illinois. He was 34. Two months later he and Barbara Christman were married.

I have no record of any of the Christman brothers serving in the War of 1812. That seems strange to me, given the enthusiasm of the Kentucky volunteers including several of the Bobbitts. Henry was 23, which seems a prime age. I don't know whether he was married at that time or not. John was 21 and Michael was 19, but both were newlyweds, although in those days that was not much of an excuse. George Jr. did not turn 18 until the war was over, and so was exempt, as were the other six boys, ages 1-14.

But strangely, George Christman Sr. did volunteer at the ripe age of 59 just as the war was ending. He had evidently been a leader in the local militia and maybe he wanted to set an example. Or perhaps he got caught up in the great popularity and success of General Jackson, of his former neighborhood. Maybe he was anxious to earn a land grant. Who knows? But he signed up. The following colorful story[30] of his enlistment has been quoted in several family pedigrees, so you might have heard it already. But in case you haven't, here it is.

> *Just before the final battle at New Orleans in 1814, Col. Posey, who is supposed to have been an officer in the regular army, camped with his command on Judge Ben Shackelford's place, near the town of Hopkinsville. While there he was joined by Maj. Reuben Harrison, with perhaps a battalion of Christian County troops. Among these was a company commanded by an eccentric old Dutchman named Geo. Christman, who lived close by the camp. When the orders came to move he was at home with his family and in bed. Not being able to read the language of his adopted country, or perhaps any other, when the note was received he jumped out of bed, and, not waiting to dress himself, rushed over to his nearest neighbor, Malcolm McNeil, in his shirt and drawers. Learning its import, he rushed back home in breathless haste, and when within hailing distance began calling out in broken English...*

And here follows a somewhat insulting representation of shouting in a stereotypical German accent directed to his wife to the effect that he needed to leave at once. I can't bear to include that. Maybe it is true that George couldn't read, but he was certainly capable of speaking English, having been born and raised in America.

The writer continued:

> *The bellicose old Teuton led his command to New Orleans under Major Harrison...and there, with his (company) contributed much to the success of the battle.*

Perrin's story is entertaining, and possibly mostly accurate. He got George's wife's name wrong—he thought it had been Katrina, all the better for the German-mocking humor. And I can verify that the named characters existed, most notably, Judge Ben Shackelford and Malcolm McNeil. I don't know

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[30] William Henry Parrin, *Counties of Todd and Christian, Kentucky: Historical and Biographical,* 1884 page 172.

exactly where Shackelford lived. The 1878 map shows Judge Shackelford's physician son living near the southwest corner of Hopkinsville. If that had been the house of the judge, he was not exactly a neighbor of George, but certainly an acquaintance. However, Malcolm McNeil was certainly a close neighbor. I was able to learn the location of McNeil's house through the many documents of his illustrious history. He lived one mile south of the bridge where the road to Princeton crosses Sinking Fork. Taking the author at is word that McNeil was George's closest neighbor would give us a good idea of the location of George's house, especially if there was a mill, which would be located around the closest point on the river as I have indicated on the above map. There is one problem, though. The writings on Malcolm McNeil suggest that he moved to Sinking Fork in 1817, too late for this story. Well, they must have gotten the date wrong, otherwise the whole enlistment story is fabricated.

George Christman's name appears on a War of 1812 index card for Kentucky Volunteers. He entered the war as a Corporal and left it as a Sergeant, alive and with a land bounty. There were four other George Christmans in the war hailing from Maryland and New York, a total of 32 soldiers with the Christman surname, but only one from Kentucky.

While George and his militia men were working their way toward New Orleans, Andrew Jackson was still in Florida, defeating the British and Spanish in the Battle of Pensacola on November 7th, but by December 1, 1814 Jackson was in New Orleans declaring martial law in the city. With the help of Jean Lafitte's smugglers and utilizing militias from several states including Kentucky and George Christman, he defeated the British on January 26th. Ironically, a peace treaty had been signed in Europe before the battle, but word had not yet reached the combatants, and it did not prevent Andrew Jackson from becoming a national hero. American veterans of the war were awarded land grants, some of which were in Morgan County, Illinois, 291 miles to the northwest of Hopkinsville.

The eruption of the volcano Krakatoa in Indonesia in April, 1815 was the greatest in the world's recorded history and left behind what was called "dry fog," a veil of soot in the atmosphere that dimmed the sun sufficiently to allow the observation of sunspots with the naked eye and caused the coldest winter anyone had known. 1816 became known as "the year without summer." Frosts were recorded into August in the northeastern states, and there were three successive years of crop failures, causing people to leave their unproductive farms and migrate west, hoping for better conditions. Vermont alone had 10,000-15,000 people migrate west, including the family of Joseph Smith in 1816-17.

Soon Illinois would open up to settlers. The first to enter Morgan County arrived in 1818.

In Kentucky on March 17, 1818 John Christman surveyed for 150 acres on the source of the Tradewater River, evidently hoping to develop land close to his brother-in-law, John Bobbitt, the preacher. But by the 1820 census, he was evidently still living near to the Christman family. I know that because half of the census for Christian County seems to have been lost, including the pages where the Bobbitts were recorded. What we do know is that the town of Hopkinsville had 454 people, but the total population of the county was 10,459 (including the lost portion of the census.) This population growth is especially remarkable considering that the area of the county had been markedly reduced by forming Trigg County on the west and Todd on the east that year.

George Chrisman (sic), Sr. was on page seven of the census with John's family, George Jr., and Stephen Bobbitt, who had married Barbara Christman. They may have all been working together at the mill. Close by on page nine were Michael Chrisman (sic) and Jacob Chisman (sic) with their young families.

There were four boys under 18 living with George and Elizabeth. There should have been five boys and a girl, so 20 year old Caty and one of the boys may have been living with other family members. George possessed three slaves—three girls under 13 and an adult female, likely the girls' mother.

The only other Bobbitt in the truncated census was John, the preacher, on page nine with Michael and Jacob.

Jacob Christman, by then 22, had married Susan Hogg that summer and on September 25, 1820 Jacob's older brother George Jr. married Mary "Polly" Knight. Polly's family had also come from the Waxhaw area, and may have known the Christmans there or even possibly travelled with them to Kentucky. Her father with the memorable name of Night Knight had fought in the Revolutionary War.

One of the militia men who went with George's regiment to New Orleans in 1814 was a neighbor in Sinking Fork named William Williams, who had left behind a young wife named Elizabeth and two children, a boy and a girl named Polly. (Actually her name was Mary Almira Williams.) Williams never returned from Louisiana. I don't know whether he died or just deserted. His descendants believe that he may have died *en route* to the battle. I tried to discover which it was and found a William Williams living alone in New Orleans in 1815, who had been a soldier, but that means nothing. There were 64 veterans of that war with that exact name.

As the story goes,

> *When her husband did not return to Christian County with the others, Elizabeth Williams rode away from the Williams farm on horseback taking an infant son, saying she would return to her people in North Carolina. She left Mary, then age four or five, in the care of a neighbor family, promising to send for her later. It is not known if she ever arrived at her intended destination as those she left in Kentucky had no further word from her.*
>
> *The first information on Mary is in the Court Order Book, 1808-1814, pg. 349 (Film 463425), Hopkinsville, Christian County, Kentucky, Monday, September 6, 1913. "Ordered that William Walker take the charge care and custody of Polly Williams, infant child of William Williams, late of this county." This legal document states that she was 'bound' to William Walker. This meant that she had to work out her keep until she became eighteen.*
>
> *When Mary and Peter Chrisman (sic) were married on 25 May 1824, his father, George, paid the Walker family the amount they claimed was due to them for Mary's services until such time as she would have become eighteen. She was 17 at the time of her marriage.*[31]

That year George Christman's hero Andrew Jackson was running for president as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee, the border of which was only fifteen miles south of George's house. Jackson had served in the senate for a single year in 1797 before he suddenly resigned out of disgust with President John Adams, so this was a long-delayed second term (a 25 year gap), a stepping stone to the presidency. His victory at New Orleans had marked the end of the War of 1812, but just the beginning of his political career. He had invaded Florida in 1818, executing two British agents and forcing Spain to sell the

[31] https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/LKVY-1K9.

province to the United States, and serving briefly as Florida's territorial governor before returning to Tennessee.

Although Jackson won 42% of the popular vote and more electoral votes than his opponents William H. Crawford, Henry Clay or John Quincy Adams, he failed to win a majority, and went on to lose the election in the House of Representatives, when Crawford was eliminated by a paralyzing stroke and Henry Clay, who was Speaker of the House, withdrew and threw his support to Adams, the son of Jackson's enemy John Adams. In return Adams named Clay Secretary of State. Jackson and his followers were outraged, feeling that the election had been stolen.

This no doubt impacted Christian County, as well as all of the frontier states in the South and the Midwest, who all favored Jackson. As the new territories expanded, this sentiment was reflected in the names of their cities and counties. I have counted 20 towns named Jackson or Old Hickory, his nickname, or Hermitage, his homestead, almost all in the South and Midwest, and 24 Jackson Counties. There must be many more townships, schools, parks, streets, and warships named Jackson, and I haven't even considered variations such as Jacksonville. And many of these were named in defiance of the "stolen" election, *before* his successful election in 1829.

One of these was Jacksonville, Illinois, which was established in 1825 as the county seat of Morgan County.

The federal Government periodically established land grants for veterans of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and later to veterans of the Mexican War and Indian wars from 1775-1855. The dual purpose of the grants were to promote enlistment and to reward service for veterans and their heirs. Large tracts of lands were set aside for this purpose. For example, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Ohio, and Tennessee were largely settled by veterans of the Revolutionary War. Actually, most land warrants were sold rather than actually settled on, which may explain how the Christmans got to Kentucky. Of course, the rationale for the move to Morgan County may have come from George's service in New Orleans. Perhaps that was part of his great eagerness to volunteer.

Morgan and many other counties in Illinois were being organized by the legislature in Springfield and surveyed into thousands of 80 acres pieces designed as land grants for immigrant settlers. Some of these were the Christmans and the Bobbitts, and they were preparing to move 325 miles north across the Ohio River border of Kentucky to claim them.

On January 1, 1826, Peter Christman and Mary Williams had their first child. A month later, John and Nancy Bobbitt had their seventh child, John Bobbitt Christman. Edgar Mantilbrant Christman was born in October to Michael and Sally Bobbitt Christman, their third child. The Christman and Bobbitt families were hatching children like locusts ready to swarm, and when they lifted off in the spring of 1827 it must have been an awesome spectacle.

I have wondered how and when the two families made their exit. They left no record of their travel. Did they go by river or by land? Who and how many left? My first thought was river travel. The first steamboats on the Ohio and Mississippi River were launched in 1811, and river travel surged in 1824, when the Supreme Court ended Robert Fulton's monopoly on shallow draft steamboat keels, which were necessary for river travel. General LaFayette travelled the Ohio River by steamboat on his return trip to America in 1825. The Erie Canal had opened that year and river travel was becoming a

transportation revolution. Andrew Jackson would take a packet (freight) steamer to Cincinnati on his way to claim the presidency in 1828. By 1830 there were 1,200 steamboats travelling the Mississippi.

I thought the family might go overland to Cave-in-Rock or Shawneetown to catch a steamboat heading down the Ohio and transfer at Cairo to the Mississippi for St. Lewis and Hannibal. I read that a travel writer named Basil Hall went from Louisville to St. Louis by river in 1828, but then crossed Illinois by land. Evidently steamboats were not regularly going up the Mississippi yet. I found two other travel writers of the time, but they both described travelling from Kentucky to Illinois by land. In 1828 Nathan Fletcher took a large family by ox team and wagon, traveling slow, camping out, and cooking meals over a fire. The trip took three weeks. Judge William Thomas travelled from Kentucky to Jacksonville via New Harmony, Clinton, Carlyle, Belleville, Edwardsville, Alton, and Carroll in 1826-27, about the same time as the Christmans and Bobbitts.

I concluded that our families too must have gone by land, a regular pioneer trek in covered wagons two decades before the famed Mormon crossing to Utah. The riverboats weren't quite ready, and the river was fairly far from Christian County. The trip would have involved land travel either way. And river travel would have cost too much—they had a huge group.

George was about 62 years old at that time. Of his twelve children, ten accompanied him with their own children to Illinois. Henry Christman, the oldest, stayed in Kentucky. He was 38 years old. James Christman, the second youngest child also stayed in Christian County. He was 18 and single. I don't think he stayed for love--he was not married until seven years later. I have not been able learn much more about either of them, but suppose that they benefitted from the property left behind by their families.

Counting spouses and 21 grandchildren, the Christman traveling party would have been 39 people, possibly carrying a couple of millstones. Three of the spouses were Bobbitts. I wonder what they did with their slaves. Illinois was a free state.

But that is just part of the travelling party. Although the Bobbitt patriarch, Isham, and his wife Elizabeth waited three more years before moving to Illinois, six of their eleven children left with their families at the same time as the Christmans. They probably all travelled together. Not counting the three families who were married to Christmans, there were 14 additional Bobbitts in the company. The oldest Bobbitt son, William James, was living in Missouri, having moved there between 1813 and 1814. But he and his family turned up in Illinois sometime between 1828 and 1830.

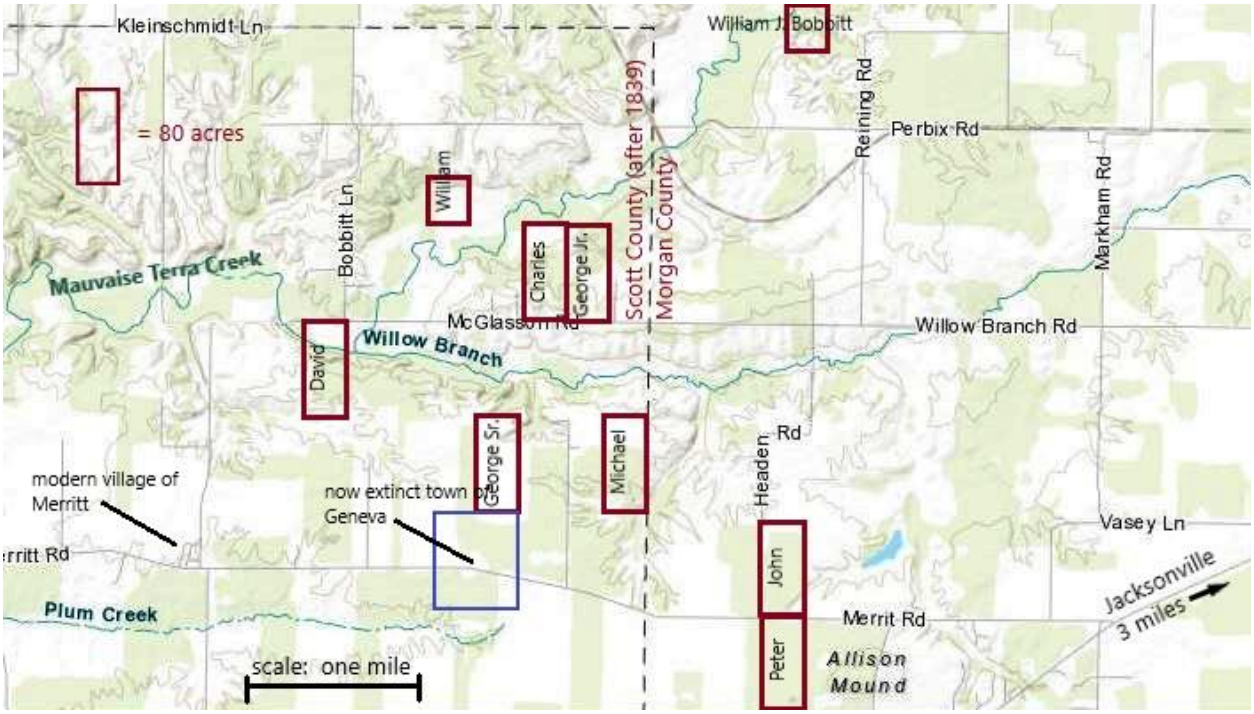
And that was not all. Frances and Elizabeth Bobbitt had married a pair of brothers named Jones. Their father, the Reverend Samuel Bennett Jones, a 71 year old Revolutionary War Veteran, and his wife Nancy joined the group and brought along with them the families of two more of his adult children, adding 15 more travelers. So, assuming there were no additional outsiders in the group, there would have been 17 households in the wagon company totaling 68 people. It appears that they left in the spring of 1827 as soon as the weather permitted.

The trip probably took them several weeks, requiring them to ferry across the Ohio River and negotiate the timbered country of southern Illinois before hitting the fertile plains. The earliest objective evidence of their arrival is the registration of a land grant of 80 acres to John Christman in Morgan

County on the Willow Branch of Mauvaise Terre Creek[32] about four miles west of Jacksonville, issued on May 3, 1827.

On modern maps Mauvaise Terre Creek begins at a small lake on the eastern border of Jacksonville, joins a branch coming from about 10 miles to the northeast, circles around the north of town meandering westward for about eight miles (as the crow flies) until it joins the Willow Branch, which flows from the west side of the town. Together the waters flow west past Exeter and Oxville, where mills were built, and empty into the Illinois River about eight miles south of Meredosia. The Christmans settled on the land around the two creeks to the west of town.

The wooded areas along the creeks provided materials and shelter for the first cabins of settlers unaccustomed to the broad plains of the Midwest as well as an opportunity to build a mill. The Christmans built a least one, and quickly claimed land along the course of both creeks between Jacksonville, through Chapin up to Meredosia. If a mill was built at Geneva, it seems likely that it would have been on David's land, which was actually located on bigger water after the Willow Branch joined the Mauvaise Terra. It is also possible that they built a mill a few years later after William and John obtained several plots of land east of Meredosia on Coon Run. Like the Christmans' previous two locations, I have been unable to find definitive historical verification of a mill's location.



[32] Mauvaise Terre Creek was named by French explorers about 1720. The name, which is of French origen, is correctly pronounced "Mo-vez-tehr." Translated into English, it means "bad land," or "bad earth." The French believed the land around the creek's mouth, where it emptied into the Illinois River, to be of poor quality. On some maps the name is rendered as a single word, Mauvaisterre. https://www.myjournalcourier.com/news/article/The-way-we-were-Meandering-on-the-name-12577180.php.

The above map shows property grants by the federal government to the Christman family, which were made between 1827 and about 1832. Since none of the brothers served in the military, all of their properties on this map were purchased from the government, not bestowed as a war bounty. The cost of the land was $1.25 per acre, or $100 for each 80 acre lot shown here. Eighty acres was considered the ideal amount of land for a single farmer, the most that one man could fully utilize. Although I have shown only the Christman properties on this map, by the mid-1830s every bit of the land on it had been purchased or granted. The Christmans had neighbors on every side. The area shown here is about 25 square miles, which could accommodate 200 farms of 80 acres each, a population of 1,000 people or more. The Christmans probably had additional land which they bought from individuals, since this map only shows the original government land grants, which were frequently sold.

One of their neighbors was Elisha Kellogg, who with his brother Seymour and an acquaintance from their home in Genesee County, New York named Ambrose Collins, were the very first settlers to live between the Illinois River and the Sangamon, which runs through Springfield, the current capitol about 55 miles to the east. They came down the Ohio River in a flatboat to Shawnee Town on the southern border of Illinois in 1819, bought four yokes of oxen and two wagons, and headed to Edwardsville, where they spent the winter. From there they drove their oxen on 75 miles of Indian trails to establish cabins on either side of the north fork of the Mauvaise Terre about ten miles east of present Jacksonville, nearly perishing from a range fire and the cold of the following winter. Amazingly they were able to raise a crop of corn to eat and cotton for sale, which they ginned themselves and transported down the Mauvaise Terre to the Illinois River and to St. Louis in a canoe they had made. Seymour Kellogg moved in 1823 to Exeter (about six miles east of the Christman settlement), where he became postmaster and a member of the county commission. Four years later, his brother Elisha also left their original cabins on the north fork and bought a farm lot near the Willow Branch about the time that the Christman family arrived in 1827.

Real estate sales were booming throughout the county and the population was expanding. Jacksonville, having incorporated in 1825, was thriving and in 1832, nearby Meredosia was laid out. Elisha Kellogg and his son-in-law "caught town site fever" and recorded a plat for his proposed town named Geneva right in the middle of a square of 160 acres, which he had purchased from grantees. The principle street was the Old State Road from Springfield through the center of Hopkinsville to Naples on the Illinois River. Town lots in Geneva were not in great demand—I suppose the farmers preferred to stay on their farm acreage--but business lots sold. Geneva eventually had a hotel, a post office, several stores, a ballroom, blacksmith shop and a number of residences with a distillery and a corn mill operated by oxen "hard nearby."[33] Perhaps the corn mill was run by the Christman family.

As you can see from the map, I don't have evidence of a lot of the Bobbitt families living around Geneva, but there remains to this day a Bobbitt Lane, which you can see running north from David's property. William Bobbitt's 40 acres at the top of the map were not bought until March 15, 1837 after he had returned to join the family after living briefly in Missouri. You will remember, that he did not make the trip from Kentucky in 1827 with the families. Many of the Bobbitts located in Chapin and near Meredosia in the northwestern part of Morgan County. In the early 1830s William and John Christman

[33] Frank J. Heinl, "The First Settlers in Morgan County: The Kelloggs and Charles Collins." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* Published by University of Illinois Press on behalf of the Illinois State Historical Society. Vol. 18, No. 1, Jacksonville Centennial Number (Apr., 1925), pp. 76-88 (16 pages).

sold out and moved to Meredosia as well. So, possibly, had George Jr., although I don't have land purchase evidence of that. His daughter Polly Ann is said to have been born in Meredosia in December of 1828, although the date of George's purchase shown on my map was after that. Some family historians suggest that George Christman Sr. established his mill in Meredosia. David Christman married Jane Dickson on July 11, 1829 and moved even further north to McDonough County, which had been carved out of Schuyler in 1826 and was also booming. Their first daughter was born there at Industry Township in January, 1832 before the town of Geneva had been established.

There was much to draw the family to Meredosia, which at that time was said to be "a thriving, energetic town." An 1837 travelers' guide to Illinois gave the following description of the village: "Meridosia (sic) is a place of considerable business…It is situated on an elevated sand ridge, with a good landing, when the water is not too low. Here are two mills, several stores, and near 300 inhabitants. The great railroad, extending from the Wabash River across the state to the Mississippi, will pass through this town."[34]

Isham Bobbitt, the family patriarch remained in Kentucky three more years according to the 1830 census, but then followed the Christmans to Illinois. He registered with the Revolutionary Army pension roll in Morgan County on March 4, 1831, evidently trying to make good on a claim for free land, though I did not find a land bounty record. He died in Geneva in 1836 at the age of 81 and was buried in the small town of Chapin about midway between Geneva and Meredosia, where his oldest son William James Bobbitt died the same year. Isham's wife Elizabeth lived to the age of 90 and was buried beside them. His children Stephen, Sarah, and Nancy, who had all married Christmans, spent the rest of their lives in Morgan County, and so did Frances and Betsy, who had married the Jones brothers.

The youngest Bobbitt son, Isham Drury, moved to Hancock County sometime between 1832 and 1835, where he paid Nauvoo property tax in 1842. I don't think that he was a Mormon, for he served many of his later years as a deacon of his Protestant church. He could have been part of the opposition to the Mormons, but I did not find any evidence of it. By 1850 when the Mormons had all cleared out to Zion, Isham Drury had moved 120 miles east to Tazewell County, and died in Magnolia Township, Putnum, Illinois in 1862.

[34] https://www.myjournalcourier.com/news/article/The-way-we-were-Establishing-a-county-river-port-12587127.php)

Chapter Three -- Charles Crismon – His Early Years

When he arrived with his family at Morgan County, Illinois in the spring of 1826, Charles was 19. No doubt he filled a grown man's role driving an ox wagon and herding animals on the journey from Kentucky. And now he was faced with preparing a farm for himself. And finding a wife. I know little about the events of his life during the first years in the area, but there is much to be learned about his neighborhood.

In 1826, religious meetings in Morgan County were held in schoolhouses and private dwellings, and when the weather was warm often in barns and arbors. There were Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. There was a gristmill and a saw mill at nearby Exeter and a horse powered mill for corn run by Captain John Wyatt and Mr. Reeder. James Overton owned a tread wheel mill. There were a grist and sawmill on Indian Creek owned by William Harrison and James Dinwiddie, and a horse mill owned by Mr. A. Hall at the head of Indian Creek. Exeter was 10 miles west of Geneva. There was a sawmill run by James McGill on the Mauvaise Terre, but I'm not sure how close to the Christmans that was.

Two groups vied for power. The easterners were called Yankees. They were mostly anti-slavery and voted for John Quincy Adams or Henry Clay. The southerners were called White People. They uniformly supported Andrew Jackson. The two sides had a very different approach to the Underground Railway for escaped slaves, as you can imagine, and before 1830 the freedom pipeline opened up in Illinois and ran right through Jacksonville where there was a safe house, which is now a museum.

Now, I'm going to complicate this story by introducing parts of the history of Mormonism. If you don't already know, Mormonism would soon become a central part of Charles' and his young wife's life and of the lives of their descendants.

A month after Charles Christman's 20th birthday, a young man about his age from upstate New York married a Pennsylvania girl named Emma Hale without her parents' consent on January 19, 1827. Joseph Smith was boarding with Isaac and Elizabeth Lewis Hale and had been secretly meeting with their daughter at a friend's house. When the Hales resisted the relationship due to Joseph's religious ideas, he and Emma eloped across the state line to South Bainbridge, New York, where they were married the following day. Then the couple moved to the home of Smith's parents on the edge of Manchester Township, near Palmyra, New York. Eight months later Joseph received golden plates of scripture from an angel named Moroni.

The story of how 23 year old Charles Christman met and married a 15 year old girl from a town 45 miles away, whose mother might have been related to the governor of Illinois, is not known, and raises a couple of questions which I'll try to address as we proceed.

The town of Geneva did not exist for another two or three years, so Charles and Polly Hill could not have met at a social gathering at the ballroom, which was later built near his farm. Perhaps there were gathering places for young people in Jacksonville—it had been founded five years previously. Forty-five miles seems a long distance in those days to sustain a relationship. Maybe they met somewhere in between. Maybe the two families had known each other before coming to Illinois.

On March 26, 1830 the Book of Mormon was translated from the golden plates and published for the first time, and on April 6th, the Church of Jesus Christ[35] was organized in Fayette, New York.

Charles and Mary "Polly" Hill[36] were married somewhere in Morgan County, most likely in the home of his or her parents, just a month after Joseph Smith's church was organized. That was a census year, and Charles' name was listed near the rest of the Christmans, so it appears that the newlyweds were living on the farm, not in Jacksonville. Charles' land grant wasn't issued until December 1, 1830, but my guess is that they had built a cabin and were already living on his 80 acres. The census showed that they had a teenage girl living with them, probably Polly's 14 year old sister Emily.

Polly's father, Jehu Hill, was a veteran of The War of 1812 from Pendleton District, South Carolina, not very far from where the Bobbitts had lived. Jehu was a descendant of Robert Hill, a Puritan immigrant who arrived via Boston as a 20-year-old in 1635. Jehu's ancestors lived in Virginia for three generations, and in the early 1700s were among the early settlers of eastern North Carolina. Around 1788, Jehu's father moved to new land in Pendleton, South Carolina, where Jehu was born and raised, and where he married Martha Patsy Carlin around 1811. They first had a son named Emanuel, and Polly Hill was their second child, born in 1814. She was only a month old when Jehu signed up with the South Carolina militia, but from the looks of his military records, he served only 6 months, and probably did not see action in the war. In 1820 Jehu's father, Thomas Hill, moved his family west to Duck River, White County, Tennessee, pretty much stopping half-way along the same trail that the Christmans had taken to Kentucky two decades earlier. Jehu and Martha packed up their son and four daughters, ages 1-8, and accompanied his father's family.

Eight years later in the spring of 1828 Jehu pulled up stakes again and moved to Morgan County, Illinois. By this time Polly was 14 years old. Her older brother Emanuel apparently stayed behind with his grandparents in Tennessee and never made the move to Illinois, but the three girls and a two year old brother did. They first spent the summer in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and then arrived in Carlinville, Macoupin County, Illinois in the fall.[37]

The stop in Hopkinsville is interesting to me. Why did they stay there for the summer? If the dates are accurate, the Hills arrived there a year after the Christmans had moved on. Maybe the Hills had known the Bobbitts in South Carolina and stayed the summer to visit Isham, who had not yet moved to Illinois. Or maybe the Hills had relatives of their own to visit in Kentucky. That could support a possible relationship to Thomas Carlin, the soon-to-be governor of Illinois and founder of Carlinville, where the family finally located, which brings up the second question.

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[35] The Church underwent several name changes during the 1830s, being called the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church of God, and then in 1834, the name was officially changed to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* pp. 23, 24.

[36] Have you noticed how many Marys in this story were called "Polly"? I looked it up, and though illogical to our generation, Polly was the usual nickname for Mary in those days, almost the rule, sort of like Bob for Robert or Dick for Richard.

[37] See the biography of Emily Hill, https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KWV3-YNC.

Thomas Carlin

Thomas Carlin had been born in Kentucky, but as a very young man he became an early pioneer in Illinois, building a log cabin across from the mouth of the Missouri River and operating a ferry until 1818, when Illinois was granted statehood. He helped to organize Greene County and laid out the county seat, Carrolton, in 1821, upon land that Carlin owned. He was sheriff there, and was serving as an Illinois senator when the Hills arrived in Illinois. Carlin had been instrumental in passing the bill that created Macoupin County, and the county seat was named Carlinville after him in 1828. It was ten years later that he became governor. He preceded the infamous (to the Mormons) Governor Ford.

It seems a strange coincidence that the Hills would settle in a town that was to bear Martha Patsy Carlin's maiden name. Granted, Carlin is not a rare surname, but it isn't really that common, either. And the Hills were among the very first settlers in Carlinsville, having arrived a year before the town officially existed. Did they come on a tip from Thomas Carlin? I felt sure that was the case when I looked at Patsy's parents' names as listed in FamilySearch: John Evans Carlin and Elizabeth Holt. Those are the names of Governor Thomas Carlin's older brother and sister-in-law, which would make the governor Patsy's uncle. It seemed certain to me that he had personally recruited them to settle in the town he had chartered.

But as I looked more carefully at the Thomas Carlin's pedigree I could see that there was a problem. These could not have been Patsy's parents. Patsy Carlin was born in 1795, when the governor's brother was only 12 years old and his wife had not even been born yet. And the governor's family was from Virginia, not South Carolina where Patsy married Jehu. So I've concluded that the name connection was just a coincidence, but you never know.

I found likely candidates for Patsy's real father and paternal grandfather in Greenville, South Carolina in the 1800 U.S. Census, not far from Pendleton. One was John Carlin Jr., born between 1756 and 1774 living with three boys and three girls under 10 and two more females between 16 and 25. Patsy could have been one of the younger girls. Two doors away (actually two lines down the page) was John Carlin Sr., born before 1755, living with a female born 1750-1774. These would fit. There could still be a connection with the governor, but it could only be through one of Thomas Carlin's uncles, and only if one of them settled in the Carolinas, of which I have no evidence. There is much more genealogy to do on that line.

Three years after Jehu and his family arrived, Carlinville had six dwelling houses, a blacksmith shop, one store, a dram shop, a courthouse, a schoolhouse, and a tavern, all of them built of logs or clapboards. Three of the cabins were on the main street. It cost Harbard Weatherford forty dollars to build an 18 x 20 foot schoolhouse of logs, with a sod roof, and a large fireplace with stick and clay chimney and a rock hearth. There was one door made of clapboards nailed upon cross pieces, hung upon wooden hinges and fastened by old fashioned latch and string and one window. Wide planks were thrown down loose for the flooring, only halfway covering the beams upon which they rested. Asher Beauchamp, just arrived from Kentucky, was employed to teach the school. A common candle box served as post office and a man on horseback passed through town weekly carrying the mailbags. Only one house in town had a glass window, which had six small panes. Thristram P. Hoxey was recorder and county clerk. Jefferson Weatherford was sheriff. The courthouse, which cost $150 to build in the center of the

square, was 20 x 24 feet. That is also where preaching took place. The first county jail was on West Main St, tolerably near the square. It was built of squared logs with two rooms, one above and one below, the lower one having no door and only one small grated window. The upper was reached via an outside stairway. The first Methodist Society was organized in the spring of 1831, the Baptist society in 1833.

I have paraphrased the above information from a ten-page piece,[38] in which Jehu Hill and Martha Patsy Carlin were not mentioned once. Maybe they lived on a farm outside of town.

The 1830 census numbered Morgan County's population at 12,709 including 19 free black persons, which was an impressive increase from the population of three people just a decade earlier.

In July of 1830 a young man named Levi Merrick (or Myrick) and his brother Charles moved from Vermont to Spring Prairie on the Apple River in Greene County, Illinois. Levi was 22 years old and came with a wife named Philinda and a two-year-old boy named Charles. Spring Prairie was located 24 miles south of Jacksonville near Carrollton, Thomas Carlin's home. Nowadays there is no town named Spring Prairie, but in one history book, Carrollton was said to be "pleasantly situated on the borders of Spring Prairie." Levi Merrick would come to play an important role in the lives of Charles and Polly Hill.

Mormon Elders Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson were called on a mission that September to the "Lamanites," the Native Americans living across the Missouri River from Missouri. They passed through Kirtland, Ohio on the way, converting Sidney Rigdon and 126 others in the area, and then travelled through southern Illinois on their way to Independence, Missouri. Parley P. Pratt wrote that they struggled, "...for three hundred miles through vast prairies and through trackless wilds of snow, no beaten road, houses few and far between..." They had travelled by steamboat down the Ohio River to where Cairo, Illinois now is, and then made their way two hundred miles up the south west corner of Illinois on foot during an unusually severe winter. Their exact route is not known, but they probably travelled along the mail route through Union and Monroe Counties to Edwardsville before ferrying the Mississippi River to St. Louis, where they rested before pushing on west to Independence, a trip of 1,500 miles. The difficult trek from Cairo to Edwardsville likely traced the very route followed by the Christmans and Bobbitts three years earlier. The missionaries preached to the occasional family they met along the way, but did not make it so far north as Morgan County.

In February of 1831 Joseph and Emma Smith moved to Kirtland, Ohio. The New York branches of the Mormon Church followed them in May and settled in nearby Thompson. But in Spring General Conference that year, Joseph revealed that the next conference would take place in Missouri. Jackson County, Missouri was dedicated as a place of gathering and a temple site was dedicated there. Within eight months, 1,200 acres of property had been acquired by Church members around Independence.

Martha Jane Christman was born on September 8, 1831, Charles and Polly's first child. Much of the rest of this chapter is based on her written memories.

1832 was the year when Charles' neighbor, Elisha Kellogg, filed his real estate development plat to make Geneva officially a town. Elisha ran a tavern, taught school and was active in his church. Geneva, which

[38] Hon. Charles A. Walker, *History of Macoupin County, Illinois: Biographical and Pictorial,* pp. 346-356.

is now extinct, was located 1.5 miles east of the present day village of Merritt, and seven miles west of Jacksonville. Christman property was adjacent to the town's northern edge.

That summer, Mormon migration from Kirtland, Ohio to Jackson County, Missouri began to accelerate. Almost 100 members arrived there without formal permission from the Church to settle in Zion. They almost certainly came through Jacksonville and Geneva, and over time, other Mormons followed in small groups. It was not by chance, that the Mormons continually traveled right through Jacksonville and little Geneva--practically everyone did. The two towns lay right on the logical land route from east to west.

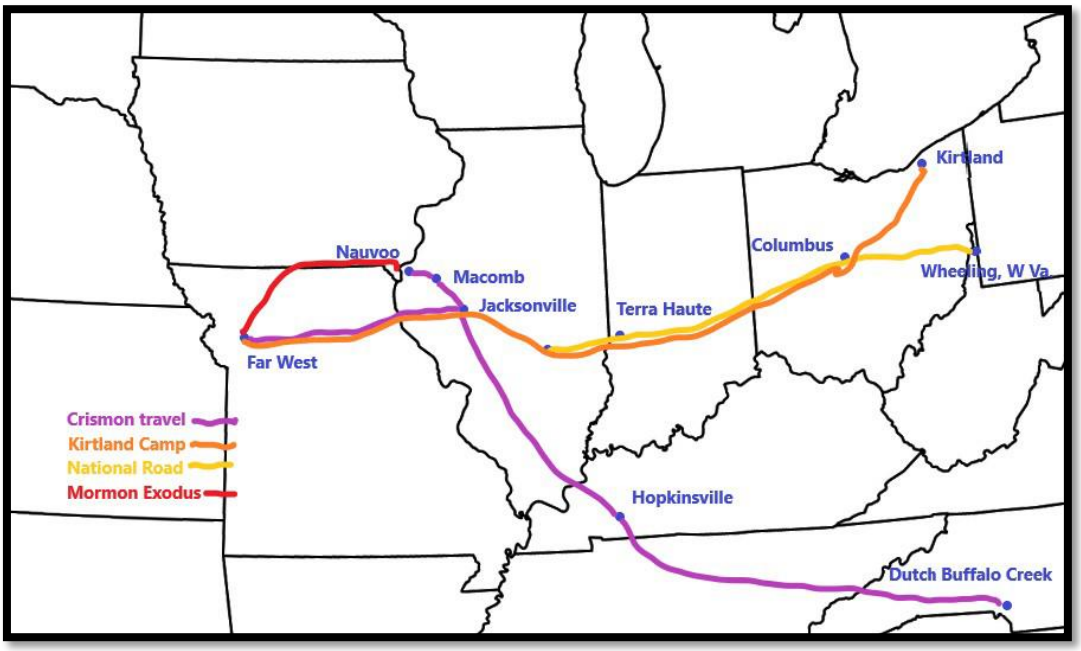
In modern America, most long trips are taken by plane, point to point with possibly a transfer or two, to reach almost any city in the world. In the 1830s the equivalent to this was water travel, but it could only service port cities. But modern travelers by ground have multiple options, since a huge network of roads and highways permits an almost infinite number of potential pathways to any distant point.

Two hundred years ago, except for waterways there were only a few established routes for travel besides Indian trails. The most important of these was the National Road. It was first commissioned by Congress in 1811 to run from Cumberland, Maryland at the furthest navigable reach of the Potomac River to the Ohio River at Wheeling, (now West) Virginia. The road had originally been a footpath and wagon track that continued on north from Wheeling to the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers where Pittsburg now lies. It was the route that young George Washington had used to take his Virginia militia group to confront the French in the ill-fated Braddock Expedition in 1755. The 1811 National Road departed from the Braddock trail at Wheeling and headed straight west through Columbus, the brand new capital city of Ohio, and across Indiana. The idea was to create a highway for western migrating pioneers all the way to Jefferson City, Missouri, but after the financial Panic of 1837 construction stopped at Terra Haute on the western border of Indiana.

Work on the National Road eventually resumed for a time, but the government ran out of funds and permanently ended the project in 1840 at Vandalia, Illinois, which was then the state capitol. Finishing the road was no longer a priority, since the country's canal system was at its peak and the railroads were beginning to join into a network. But that 1,000 kilometer stretch of highway, though never finished, remained the preferred route for ground travel. It was straight, level, and safe, one of the first roads in America to be macadamized.[39] Hardly anyone knows this fact, but most of the old National Highway is still in use, having evolved into the current US Highway 40.

[39] Macadam roads were developed in Scotland by John McAdam in about 1816. They were cambered about three inches to shed water and topped with about 8 inches of crushed rock and rolled flat, a great improvement over prior methods.

While awaiting the arrival of the National Highway, Illinois had to create its own road, which was built sometime before 1825, and it also greatly facilitated immigration. It was called the Old State Road, which ran west across the center of the state from Springfield through Jacksonville (there called "State Street"), and incidentally through little Geneva to Naples on the Illinois River. And those two roads carried a lot of the outside world right past the Christman family.



In the spring of 1833, Mormon missionaries Parley P. Pratt and William McLellan baptized Levi Merrick and his wife Philinda in Carrollton. By 1838 there were enough members there to make a branch and Levi was the president. One of his members was a young man by the name of Elijah Elmer, who had arrived in Illinois from Addison, Vermont in the fall of 1831, seeking a new life after a brush with the law. Elmer wrote in his memoir that he had arrived destitute, and worked "by the month (six dollars a month) and worked for four years and then I married to Mrs. Polly Pierce in Greene County."

Abraham Lincoln, who had been a partner in a struggling general store in New Salem, 36 miles west of Geneva, ran for the Illinois General Assembly in 1832 and lost. A short time later he was elected captain of the local militia, his first political victory, and marched to the Blackhawk War in northern Illinois before returning home without having seen direct action.

Charles and Polly's son George was born July 5, 1833.

Two weeks later, the Mormon printing office in Independence, Missouri was raided by vigilantes. There were over a thousand Mormons living in Jackson County, and their neighbors were feeling threatened.

That fall Stephan A. Douglas moved from Vermont to Jacksonville, Illinois at the age of 20 to establish a legal practice. He couldn't get enough work right away, so he went for the winter to Winchester to teach school. By March, 1834 he was back in Jacksonville, where he eventually earned the nickname,

"The Little Giant," soon leaving his law office to become a state legislator, and then a leading U.S. Senator and Abraham Lincoln's great political foe.[40]

Historian Frank J. Heinl wrote:

> *It is related that Stephen A. Douglas while on one of his county canvasses visited Geneva at the time logs were being rolled for a new building and he promptly lent a hand in the rolling.*[41]

On March 6, 1834, Polly Hill Christman's younger sister Emily Hill married Zachariah Harris in Carrollton after which they moved to Hillsborough, about 25 miles to the east. But that summer Emily returned home because her mother, Patsy Hill had become too ill to take care of her children. John was two, Adeline was three, and Franklin was 11. The twins, Jane and Elizabeth were 16, but were probably not living at home. I think Elizabeth was living with Charles and Polly in Geneva. I don't know about Jane. Patsy Hill died before Emily could reach her, and according to Emily's biography, the children were "scattered among relatives," when Jehu took to excessive drinking after his wife's death.[42]

Emily and her husband Zachariah moved to Morgan county where he became "successful and prosperous" in the harness and grocery business.

Zion's Camp, a quasi-military group, was put together in Kirtland by Joseph Smith to march to Missouri and assist the struggling Mormons there to defend their property. The commander was Joseph Smith himself. Two hundred and seven men, 11 women, and 11 children marched west along the National Road. They reached Jacksonville on June 1, 1835 and camped on the south fork of Mauvaise Terra Creek a mile east of town on a Saturday night to rest for the Sabbath. In the prophet's own words:

> *Agreeable to my instructions, about sunset Brother Roger Orton proclaimed aloud that there would be preaching under the trees within the camp at half-past ten o'clock on the morrow. There was only one stranger in the camp to hear the appointment... Sunday, June 1. —We had preaching and many of the inhabitants of the town came to hear. Elder John Carter, who had formerly been a Baptist preacher, spoke in the morning and was followed by four other elders in the course of the day, all of whom had formerly been preachers for different denominations....* Fearing spies from Missouri, the prophet had not wanted to reveal that they were Mormons, and so they posed as itinerant preachers....*During the day many questions were asked, but none*

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[40] Betty Carlson et al, *Jacksonville Illinois, The Traditions Continue*. p 15. Arcadia, 1999.

[41] Frank J. Heinl, *The First Settlers in Morgan County: The Kelloggs and Charles Collins.* Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984) Published by: University of Illinois Press on behalf of the Illinois State Historical Society. Vol. 18, No. 1, Jacksonville Centennial Number (Apr., 1925), p. 84 (16 pages).

[42] Jehu Hill, who is my 4th great grandfather, married a second wife named Annis Kniffen the next year in Morgan County and they had a daughter named Malvina, but Annis also apparently died young. Jehu moved to Illinois and made a new life for himself, marrying Catherine Riggs in 1842. They a son and six daughters, and Jehu pretty much lost contact with his scattered first family until he was united by letter with his third daughter, Emily, who reached out to him in 1857 from Salt Lake City after marrying the prominent Mormon polygamist, Abraham O. Smoot.

> *could learn our names, professions, business, or destination; and although they suspected we were "Mormons," they were very civil.*

In his own diary, Heber C. Kimball noted that the "four other elders" mentioned by the prophet were Brigham Young, Orson Hyde, Lyman Johnson, and Orson Pratt.

The next morning Zion's Camp was in Geneva. It was probably around that time that the results of Mormon missionary work were beginning to show there. The following event chronicled by Heinl was likely around that time, but probably not during the march of Zion's Camp through Geneva.[43]

> *A few years after the town was platted a number of residents in its vicinity became imbued with Mormon doctrines and it is said that Brigham Young spent some time proselyting near there. The Mormon converts in their enthusiasm planned the erection of a temple at Geneva. Framing timbers were hewed and hauled and other material gathered, but one dark night a band of men from Winchester visited the spot where the building material was gathered and the next morning it was a heap of ashes.*

I think it is more likely that the group was aiming to build a meetinghouse, not a temple as Heinl imagined. The mob from Winchester came from about seven miles south of Geneva. It is clear that the Christmans had more than a casual brush with Mormonism. And there would be much more to come.

A special Illinois census was conducted as of July 3, 1835. The Christman brothers Peter, Michael, George, John, Peter, Charles, William, and Jacob were all still living in Morgan County as were George Sr. and Stephen Bobbitt. By that time, Charles' older brother David had moved his family to Industry Township in McDonough County, about 125 miles to the north and not far from Hancock County, the future site of Nauvoo.

Abraham Lincoln was elected to the State Assembly on his second try that November and served four terms. His political career had been launched. The next year Samuel Clemens, later known as Mark Twain, was born just across the Mississippi River in Hannibal, Missouri.

Charles and Polly had their third child, James, on September 8, 1835.

And then tragedy struck. Charles' two years older brother, Peter, was killed when a millstone fell on him as he was trying to repair it. His wife's biography states that they had been living in Geneva when he died, but he was buried in Meredosia. That makes me think that perhaps the family mill had been located there. You will recall that Peter's wife was Mary "Polly" Williams, the young girl who had been abandoned by her mother in Hopkinsville and whose indenture was redeemed by George Christman to permit their marriage. She and Peter had four daughters between two months and nine years of age and a four year old boy when Peter died. The two older girls moved in with their grandparents, George and Elizabeth Christman, and Charles and Polly Hill took in Polly Williams and her younger children.

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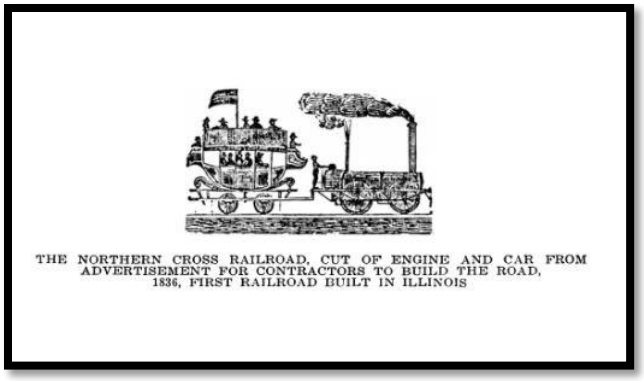
[43] Frank J. Heinl, *The First Settlers in Morgan County: The Kelloggs and Charles Collins.* Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984) Published by: University of Illinois Press on behalf of the Illinois State Historical Society. Vol. 18, No. 1, Jacksonville Centennial Number (Apr., 1925), p. 84 (16 pages).



THE NORTHERN CROSS RAILROAD, CUT OF ENGINE AND CAR FROM ADVERTISEMENT FOR CONTRACTORS TO BUILD THE ROAD, 1836, FIRST RAILROAD BUILT IN ILLINOIS

After years of self-study, Abraham Lincoln passed the Illinois bar exam in 1836, moved to Springfield to practice law, and married Mary Todd. Lincoln's most important clients were the Illinois railroads. I don't know what role Lincoln may have had in this, but in 1836 a businessman from St. Louis built the first railroad in Illinois extending eastward from Naples for about two miles. It didn't get far. The very first successful line was the Northern Cross which ran in 1838 from Meredosia, which had a river port on the shallow and unreliable Illinois River, straight east across the state through Springfield. An engine and cars were transported from Newark, New Jersey to Meredosia by riverboat, where they were assembled while the operating staff were trained. It was called The Northern Cross because two north/south lines were later created to connect with it. The railroad did not cross the entire width of Illinois, but, instead, began in Meredosia and was built east from the river port. Surveys for the Northern Cross were made in the spring of 1837, and construction began soon thereafter.[44]

On November 11, 1836, Polly Hill Crismon bore her fourth child, Esther Ann, my 2nd great grandmother.[45]

Peter's baby Barbara Ellen died at the age of two in 1837 and so did Charles and Polly's third child, James. To add to the personal tragedy for Charles and his two Pollys, most of the nation's banks failed in the Great Panic of 1837, which caused a depression which lasted into mid-1840s. The Panic was precipitated by President Andrew Jackson's vengeful dismantling of the national banking system. Prices, wages, and employment crashed. Banks collapsed, including the Kirtland Safety Society founded by Joseph Smith.

It was largely due to the resulting financial stresses on Joseph Smith, that he was obliged to flee Kirtland on January 12, 1838. He and Sidney Rigdon secretly left on horseback under cover of darkness and essentially without money. They didn't stop for 60 miles. At Norton Township, Medina County, Ohio they waited for their families, and then left in covered wagons on the National Highway to Dublin, Indiana, where Joseph spent nine days cutting wood to raise money. There he received a gift of $300 from a faithful member named Thomlinson, who had sold his farm for the purpose. The Smith and Rigdon families took separate ways to Terra Haute, Indiana, met there, and then proceeded separately the rest of the way to Far West.

I have studied several sources to determine Joseph Smith's activities during that two-month trip. In his journal there is some information about the first three weeks, but scarcely a word about the remainder of the trip, and his several biographers had nothing to add. I suppose the account is sparse because he was traveling without his usual scribe. He did note that he travelled from Terra Haute to Quincy, Illinois, from whence he crossed the Mississippi to enter Missouri. Now, if you draw a line on the map from Terra Haute to Quincy, you'll find that it goes right through Jacksonville and Geneva. Given his previous

[44] Charles M. Eames, *Historic Morgan and Classic Jacksonville*, Jacksonville, 1885.
[45] The exact year is disputed by various family genealogists. *Letters of Lace and Stones*, p. 107.

experience with Zion's Camp, I consider it safe to assert that he again followed the National Road. That is important, for it would help to confirm the truth of what I had previously considered a couple of unlikely statements about Charles Christman in the memoir of his oldest daughter, Martha Jane.

She began:

> *When I was seven years old, my father, Charles Chrisman (Crismon), joined the Church in Morgan County, Illinois, and went with Joseph Smith and family to Missouri.*

Well, Martha Jane could not have been seven when Charles joined the church. She must have meant "in her seventh year," for she was born September 8, 1831, and although the month of his baptism is not certain, there can be no doubt that he was baptized well before September 8, 1838, as I will presently show you. But I have come to believe her statement that Charles went with Joseph Smith and his family to Missouri. As far as I can tell, Joseph passed through Geneva late February or early March, 1838 with Emma, who was five months pregnant, their adopted daughter Julia Murdock Smith, age five, Joseph Smith III, age 3 and a half, and Frederick, age two. The extended Smith family followed later that year in multiple groups. Charles may have travelled on with Joseph's vulnerable family as a sort of bodyguard. However, after his arrival in Far West, Joseph wrote back to the saints remaining in Kirtland, that he had arrived at the same time as Brigham Young, Daniel S. Miles, and Levi Richards, who had caught up with him "on the last part of our journey." If they reached him before Geneva, then of course a bodyguard would not have been necessary. Sidney Rigdon's family did not arrive in Far West until April 4th just in time for Conference, having stopped in Paris, Illinois just outside of Terra Haute to attend to his daughter's illness.

Martha Jane continued,

> *Later he* (her father) *came back to Illinois for mother who had not accepted the Gospel. He took very ill and the doctors gave him up to die when Father Smith and an elder from Missouri stopped at their house on their return from Kirtland. They expressed a desire to see father, and mother objected on account of her disbelief, but they went into his room, spoke to him, knelt down by the bed and administered to him telling him he should be made well and soon be able to go to Missouri, that mother should be convinced and that he should take his family with him. In ten days he was able to transact his business and sell his property. This convinced my mother and she was baptized by Elder Levi Merrick. She became a faithful worker in the Church and always had a testimony that she had seen the power of healing.*

That is further evidence that Charles must have traveled at about the same time as Joseph Smith. Had he gone much later, he would not have had time to return for the miraculous healing. Since neither man made a written record of that period, we'll have to be content with Martha Jane's recollection.

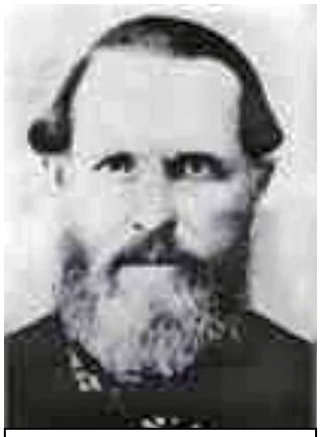
Charles must have been baptized early in 1838 by Levi Merrick, his branch president,[46] although it was Elijah Elmer, who had converted him, according to Elmer's biography. Elijah had been serving as a local missionary in Geneva. Also in Elmer's biography is the startling fact, that he had been ordained an elder by the Apostles George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff at April Conference in 1838. That conference occurred in Far West, which suggests that Elijah Elmer and Charles likely both accompanied the prophet

[46] That it was Merrick we know from the missionary registry of the church when Charles was set apart for his mission to Arizona in 1877. https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/sources/KGCB-N2B.

to Far West, if not to protect him, to attend conference. And maybe the fact that Elmer was not yet an elder when he converted Charles explains why the baptism was performed by Merrick. In those days elders did the baptizing. I have no direct evidence of this, but I suspect that Polly's 18 year old sister Elizabeth was also baptized at that time.[47]

Elijah Elmer as an older man

In addition to Charles, Polly Williams, the widow of Peter Christman, was also taught the gospel by Elijah Elmer. She was baptized by the missionary James Chauncey Snow, and it could not have happened when Charles was baptized because Elder Snow was in Kirtland in February to be married to Eliza Ann Carter. According to Eliza's autobiography, they left Kirtland after their marriage while the weather was still cold. When they reached Terra Haute, Indiana one of their oxen died and they were forced to remain there a few weeks until Hyrum Smith's company caught up to them. Hyrum had left Kirtland on March 26, 1836 for Far West with several Mormon families and ten of the Smith family including his new second wife, Mary Fielding [48] and their five children ages four months to ten years old, Hanna Grinnell, and Mary Fielding's sister and brother-in-law. Since Hyrum knew Eliza, he offered to take the Snows with them, letting her drive his baggage wagon while the men walked. They travelled together as far as Jacksonville, but when one of Hyrum's horses died, he had to leave the Snows behind. Since they were penniless, Hyrum arranged for Brother Snow to preside over the branch as a missionary in the place of Levi Merrick, while the Hyrum pushed on to Far West, arriving on May 27th. I don't know when Hyrum and the Snows arrived in Jacksonville, but I think it would have been around the end of April.



James C. Snow

It must have been later than that, when Elder James Snow baptized Polly Williams Christman, and by then, Charles was probably back home from Far West. Charles was at the worst of his illness when the third company of the Smith family passed through Geneva, led by 32 year old Don Carlos Smith with 27 other people including his brother William, William's family, and his parents, Lucy Mack and Joseph Smith Sr., the Church Patriarch. On June 4, 1838 a "blessing meeting" was being held at the home of Elisha Richards[49] in Geneva. The local members of the church including Levi and Philinda Merrick had gathered there to get patriarchal blessings from Father Smith. That was probably the very day that seven year old Martha Ann Christman witnessed the miraculous healing of her father and the subsequent baptism

[47] According to Martha Ann's account, one of Polly's sisters had the gift of tongues and warned them to escape danger in Missouri. When Polly's sister Emily later joined the church in 1842 she was said to have two sisters, who were church members. Martha wrote that she joined the church with her father.

[48] His first wife, Jerusha Barden, had died in Kirtland in October at the age of 32, 11 days after bearing their sixth child, Sarah, while Hyrum was on a trip to Far West.

[49] Elisha Richards was not part of the famous LDS Richards family. He was from Vermont. He had been in Morgan County since before 1830, was in Carrollton in 1840, and in LaFayette County, Wisconsin by 1849, where he lived for the rest of his life, evidently a Strangite.

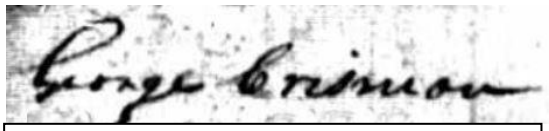
of her mother, Polly Hill by Levi Merrick, who had stepped graciously down as the branch president.

On July 6th in Far West, Joseph Smith received an unsettling letter forwarded from the trail from Don Carlos about health, livestock, and money problems. That suggests to me that the Smith family was stalled in Geneva or beyond for at least two weeks.

The Kirtland refugees continued to straggle through Morgan County. It appears that the Mormon community in Geneva served as a useful and sympathetic stopover place for them. In the meantime, Charles regained his strength and began selling property, preparing his family to join the gathering saints in Far West.

Family sources agree that George Christman was not happy with his son Charles' interest in Mormonism, and most relate the story of George's refusal to allow the name Christman to be associated with a "damned sect," which led to the spelling change to Crismon for Charles and his descendants.

Throughout my research for this story I've tried to debunk myths, generally with little success. Examples are Charles' alleged travel with Joseph Smith and the miraculous appearance of Joseph Smith Sr. to heal Charles and convert Polly Hill, which now make total sense to me. And this one is probably no different. But I can't help being a little skeptical about the name change story. In the first place, what power does a man actually have to withhold his surname from his son? Surnames can certainly be renounced, but usually on the initiative of the child, not the father. And look at the crazy variations of the spelling of Christman that we've seen throughout the previous hundred years, which happened for many reasons, or no reasons at all. And look, here is George's own name spelled Crismon in 1835, three years before Charles joined the Mormons. To readers who are offended by my skepticism, I don't blame you—I've been wrong plenty of times before, and I have no proof of this, either. In any case, it is clear that the family name has been spelled Crismon since Charles became a Mormon, and I'll try to spell it that way for Charles and his descendants from here on out.



1835 Iowa State Census

On July 5, 1838 the main body of Kirtland Latter-day Saints evacuated Kirtland, headed for Zion in Missouri. They called themselves the Kirtland Camp, and had been preparing for their departure since the previous spring. They embarked with 500+ people, 59 wagons, 97 horses, 22 oxen, 69 cows and one bull. On September 17th they too passed through Jacksonville. One traveler wrote, "From thence we came to Geneva, a small, dusty place and encamped by David Orton's on a prairie. Most of the camp was late in arriving on the ground and some did not come up til morning....James C. Snow, whom we found near Geneva, joined us." Some of the members of the Kirtland camp went no further than Geneva.[50] Perhaps one of these families bought Charles' farm.

Levi Merrick and his family joined them too, according to his excellent biography.[51] And so did the Crismons, since according to Martha Ann's story, they accompanied the Merricks.

[50] Many of the early Mormon settlers in Geneva had been part of the 1838 Kirtland Camp. http://mormonplaces.byu.edu/data/entities/480230

[51] https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KWVS-N4N

> *In the fall with Elder Merrick, our family moved to Missouri where my father bought a home about 25 miles from Far West.*

In the Crismon group were Charles and his wife Polly, his sister-in-law Polly Williams Crismon with seven year old Henry James and five year old Elizabeth Jane (the two older children stayed with their grandparents, George and Elizabeth Christman), another sister-in-law, 18 year old Elizabeth Hill, and his own three children Martha Jane, George, and Esther Ann, ages six, five, and two. That's a lot of women and children with one adult man.

Zion's Camp reached Adam-ondi-Ahman on October 4th. Since the new Crismon farm was 25 miles west of Far West, Charles and his family probably arrived there around October 1st. Wisely, Charles seems to have dropped out of the main group as soon as he found suitable land, since Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman were flooded with homeless immigrants even before the Kirtland Camp arrived. And apparently the Merricks dropped out early as well. But before long, both families began to realize that they might be safer with the main group.

They must have been aware that on October 24th David W. Patten had traveled 12 miles with a group of volunteers from Far West to Crooked River to rescue three Mormons, who had been arrested and threatened with execution. In a battle with the Ray County militia, three Mormons including Patten and one militia man were killed. Exaggerated stories of the battle made their way to Governor Boggs of Missouri, who issued his infamous extermination order on October 27th and called up 2,500 state militia men to drive the Mormons from the state.

Aware of the building danger, the Crismons seem to have moved before the Merricks. Martha wrote:

> *Being very wealthy, my father had lots of stock and valuables, and our home was one of peace until one night after prayers my mother's sister who had joined the Church with father, having the gift of tongues, told father to go to Far West as soon as possible. Next morning he moved the family (and) then returned for some stock, and found that the mob had taken all and burned the house, leaving him only the wagon and team he had used in moving.*

I believe this must have been around October 27th, just before the Hawn's Mill Massacre, and he had to pass through or near to Hawn's Mill on his way to Far West and back.

On Tuesday, October 30th the Merricks set off for Far West, but only got about 8 miles to Hawn's Mill[52] on Shoal Creek, where they stopped to get their wagon repaired, intending to go on to Far West the following day. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time. That afternoon on a clear and pleasant Indian summer day, a detachment of state militia suddenly came riding at full speed upon the settlement, firing as they came. The people scattered in every direction. Levi Merrick and his son Charles ducked for safety into the blacksmith's shop with several others, but it was a trap. Surrounding the building, the attackers shot volley after volley between the un-chinked logs, killing Levi and mortally wounding Charles. In all, 17 Mormons were killed and another 12-15 wounded, not reckoning the awful emotional trauma that all the survivors suffered. Philinda Merrick nursed nine year old Charles until he

[52] Most Mormons know the place as Haun's Mill, but modern scholarship has revealed that the owner was Jacob Hawn, a friendly non-Mormon, who left Missouri after the event and became a pioneer settler in Oregon.

died four weeks later of a severe head wound. To make matters worse, the mobbers had located Levi's wallet and stolen the $700 from the sale of his farm.

Martha did not mention Hawn's Mill, nor the loss of their friend, Levi Merrick, but she described the aftermath in Far West:

> *For a time, seven families lived in two log rooms while the mob surrounded the city and took the Prophet and leading men prisoners. In the winter we were driven out and went back to our old house in Illinois where we lived for two years.*

According to a letter to Joseph Smith on January 21, 1840, documenting his experience in Far West and his losses, Charles attested that on the last day of October or the first of November, 1838, a little before sunset several thousand armed men took him prisoner-of-war and after many insults by the soldiers, freed him to leave the state forthwith with his family, greatly to his damage and injury.[53] This would have happened just one or two days after Hawn's Mill.

Charles did leave the state "forthwith," going right back to Geneva. It must have been difficult to face his father after the debacle. Martha Ann said they were able to go back to their old house, where they stayed for two years. That is not correct—Charles had sold his property in order to buy the farm in Missouri that the mob destroyed. Rather than move in with his parents, Charles moved his family to Industry Township in McDonough County for the next two years to live with his older brother, David, who ran a mill there. David was no more interested in Mormonism than the rest of the family. I think Charles chose Industry to put more distance between his family and his father, George, whom Charles never again saw. It is probably significant that both Charles and David had four kids between one and nine years old (plus the infant Samantha) and the move got them closer to Hancock County, where the Mormons were gathering. David and Charles remained close throughout the rest of their lives although they lived over a thousand miles apart.

In 1839 Scott County, Illinois was carved out of Morgan County. Geneva ended up barely inside the new county's eastern border. Charles' brother William claimed 40 acres near Bobbitt Lane and Mauvaise Terre Creek. Polly Elmer, the wife of Charles' missionary, died of quinsy.[54] I suppose that many of the Morgan County Mormons who had left Far West gravitated back home, for there is evidence of continued Church activity in Geneva, albeit without the old branch president or Charles Crismon's family. I found an interesting entry in the minutes of General Conference in Nauvoo the next year: *Stakes were appointed at Quincy...Columbus...Payson...Geneva, Morgan County, Illinois, and at Springfield, Illinois.*[55] Who would have guessed that Geneva was once a stake?

1840 was another census year, but Charles' name is not found among his father and brothers in their new Scott County. If fact, I couldn't find Charles anywhere in the census. That is because he was on a mission. I like to believe that he was able to delay leaving until after March 27th when his fifth child Samantha was born. His companion, Elder Daniel Tyler, had already commenced preaching in Scott

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[53] https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KGCB-N2B.

[54] Quinsy is the old name for strep throat infection, a dangerous disease before antibiotics that also claimed the life of George Washington.

[55] *Millennial Star*, vol. 18, pp. 216,232. When the stake was organized, William Bosley was chosen as president and Gardner Clark as bishop. Bosley was called on a mission October 1841, and Bishop Clark moved to Nauvoo in April, 1842. There is no further record of the branch.

County, Illinois—though just part time due to ill health recovering from his trials in Missouri. Then Tyler traveled to the Southern States Mission with R.D. Shelden and Charles Crismon. Tyler and Shelden stayed in Mississippi, but Charles Crismon went on without them to Tennessee.

Meanwhile, Peter Christman's widow Polly Williams married her missionary, Elijah Elmer, in Winchester, Scott, Illinois on April 28, 1840, the second marriage for both. Her older daughters did not live with them, much to the dismay of Elijah, who wrote, "Catherine never did live with me at all." She was 11 and Permelia was 14. I think they preferred to continue living with the Crismons.

Polly Williams Elmer

Elijah Elmer and Polly Williams moved in January, 1841 to Geneva, where their daughter Crucy was born on February 2nd. A year of two later, Elijah went on a mission to Vermont, from which he hurriedly returned upon the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. He and Polly led a quintessential Mormon pioneer life. They left Nauvoo with the other saints in February, 1846 and lost a child crossing the plains. Elmer joined the Mormon Battalion and later wrote up his experience. He returned to Utah via the California gold fields, joining Mary and Crucy at Council Bluffs. They had eight more children together and remained stalwart Mormons. They were among the first settlers of Beaver, Utah and finished out their lives in Panguitch.

Elizabeth Hill

Elizabeth Hill, the sister who could speak in tongues, was 22 years old when she married James Granville Bobbitt, the son of Stephen Bobbitt and Barbara Marie Christman, grandson of Isham. Elizabeth and James lived in Exeter just a few miles west down the road from the Christman/Bobbitt community until 1856, when they moved to San Bernardino, California to live briefly near Charles Crismon just before the Mormon Colonies were called back to Utah because of the impending "Utah War" with the Federal Government. I don't know whether Elizabeth remained a Mormon after marrying into this preaching Protestant family, but suspect not, for they did not obey Brigham Young's call to Zion, but moved to Bear Creek in the mountains of Santa Cruz around 1858 and lived out their lives in the Golden State.

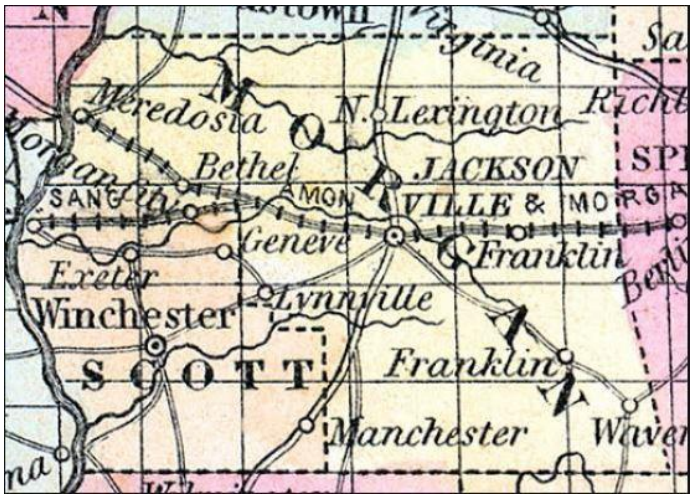
Charles must have been home from his one year mission sometime before May, 1841 because he and Polly had another child nine months later, whom they named Mary Ann. When he arrived home, he worked with David at milling on Grindstone Creek. David been living in Industry Township since 1831, having arrived before he and his new wife Jane Dickson had their first child, probably because of the opportunity to set up his own milling operation. The Township was about 2/3 timbered, possessed coal resources, and must have reminded him of Christian County, Kentucky. The very first settlers had arrived there about 1826, so he was

among the early settlers there. David was pro-slavery, and got mentioned in a history book[56] for capturing a group of five Negros and their agent (slave transporter) who had camped on his land, and for claiming a reward. This probably happened after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1852, long after Charles and Polly had left Industry for Hancock County. David and Jane raised their family in Illinois, but as empty nesters moved to Beatrice, Nebraska around 1866, where he established a mill on the Big Blue River through the Homestead Act of 1862.

Charles and Polly left Industry Township in the summer of 1842 for Macedonia, a Mormon Stake near Nauvoo, where he set up a milling operation and lived for two years until the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, when he joined the main group of saints in Nauvoo.

For the details of these years and the rest of his amazing and productive life, I refer you to the fine work of Charles H. Crismon, great grandson of Charles Crismon and to my own book, Letters of Lace and Stones.[57]

Elizabeth Hagler Christman died September 1, 1848 in Geneva at the age of 77 and George Christman died two years later on December 5th. Both were buried in Meredosia.



I was able to find an 1857 map that still showed Geneva, but by 1870 the town had entirely and permanently disappeared. All that can be seen of it on Google Maps is a winding creek, fields, and farm roads oriented at right angles.

If you take the time to read the remainder of the life of Charles Crismon, you will be well rewarded. This chapter tells little more than a hundredth part of his many accomplishments. Although seldom mentioned in official L.D.S. history, Charles and his family were a huge part of it. He was a dynamo, working behind the scenes to make everything happen. I'll give you just a few examples.

Charles was part of Bishop George Miller's advance company to prepare the Mormon Trail for Brigham Young's initial party. When Miller was insubordinate to Brigham Young, Charles obeyed, and returned to Winter Quarters. He was sent on another mission to the South to gather the southern saints to Deseret, which he did, and returned in time to haul the first millstones in his wagon to Salt Lake City as a member of the last company to arrive in 1847. He built the first grist mill[58] and first lumber mill in Deseret, and in Sugar House he built the first home in the valley with a wooden roof and floors. He sold his mill interest to Brigham Young, rented out his house, and took his family to the California gold fields in 1849, and then to San Francisco, where he was financially successful. He was sent to San Bernardino

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[56] Clarke, S. J., *History of McDonough County, Illinois*, pub 1878, pp. 274-275.

[57] Bateman, K.A., *Letters of Lace and Stones: Oakeys and Sirrines, Two Families Joined and Separated by Pioneering and Polygamy,* 2018. https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/sources/KGCB-N2B

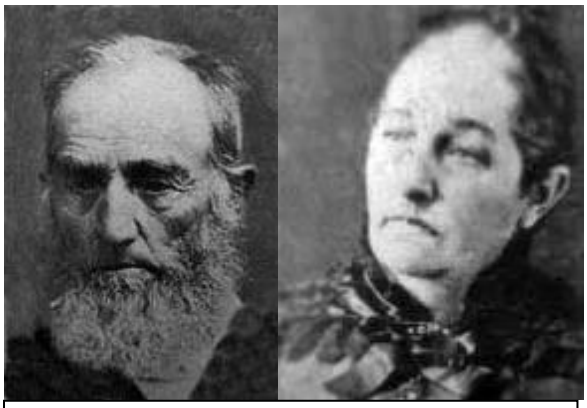
[58] There is a plaque and monument at the mouth of City Creek Canyon in Salt Lake City to commemorate the grist mill.

by the Mormon apostles Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich to lay the groundwork for the Mormon Colony there, which included a great many of his Southern Saints. He built a sawmill there, a distillery, and an impressive freighting company, beginning with the transport of San Bernardino's flour and lumber to Los Angeles, and eventually freighting goods from California to Utah to the Missouri River. One of his muleskinners was none other than Wyatt Earp, before he became the famous lawman.

When the Mormons were called back to Utah from San Bernardino, he returned to Zion in 1858 with 300 mules, 2,000 sheep and cattle, and Utah's first beehives. In Salt Lake Valley he built several more mills, raised vast herds of sheep, bought and sold mines, and was regarded by some as the richest man in the territory save only Brigham Young.

He practiced polygamy. In addition to Polly, Charles married four more wives, two of whom he married in a single day. He had 36 children, and I don't know how many grandchildren. He contracted to build the roadbed for the Transcontinental Railroad and later for the Oregon Short Line.

At the age of 70, Charles was called on another mission, to settle Mesa, Arizona. He took three of his five wives with him in five covered wagons. Polly refused to go with him—she was worn out with pioneering, nor had she gone to San Bernardino. Still, he managed to support her well and visit her relatively often. In Arizona Charles took the lead in developing miles of irrigation canals, building upon ancient Native American systems. His statue stands today in Mesa as one of the five founding figures of the city.



Charles and Polly Hill Crismon

Charles died in Mesa on March 23, 1890 at the age of 82. In her final years Mary Polly Hill Crismon lived with her daughter, Samantha Crismon Chase in Far West, Weber County, Utah, where she died May 15, 1892 at the age of 77.